THE

# CABINET;

OR, MONTHLY REPORT OF

# POLITE LITERATURE.

*MARCH* 1807.

## ROBERT WILLIAM ELLISTON, Esq.

IT is one part of our plan to give faithful portraits, and authentic biographical notices, of all PUBLIC CHARACTERS who have raised themselves into distinction by the force of talent, in the different departments of LITERATURE, CRITICISM, POETRY, the ARTS, MUSIC and the DRAMA. It has been convenient to us, not however from any marked preference, to pay our earliest attention to the *Stage*; and we have chosen to commence with one of its principal living ornaments, Mr. ELLISTON.

He was born in London, in the year 1774. His father, a watch-maker of some eminence, died a few years ago. The death of his uncle William Elliston, D. D. and Master of Sidney College, Cambridge, took place on the 11th of last month. Professor Martyn, so justly celebrated for his botanical researches and publications, is another of his uncles. The family, therefore, is remarkable for its ingenuity, respectability, and learning.

Dr. Elliston was desirous of bringing up his nephew to the church; and, taking upon himself the entire superintendance and expence of his education, placed him in St. Paul's school. In our great public seminaries it is usual, at certain periods, to allow the boys to recite before their school-fellows. The practice is laudable and beneficial; but, as there is no food so gratifying to youthful vanity as the applause which follows such exhibitions, the successful declaimer is sometimes led to indulge ideas of his own, very foreign from the design of his master, or the wishes of his friends. In

the year 1790, Elliston delivered an English Thesis, of which this was the subject; '*nemo confidat nimium secundis.*' The approbation he received on this, and other occasions of a similar kind, was too flattering to be forgotten; from the extracted speeches of plays, he turned to the plays themselves, and, soon imagining himself the character he read, he made his appearance in Pierre, before a private audience at the Lyceum, in the Strand. This dramatic bias produced serious remonstrances from his relations; but the *die was cast*, 'young *Ammon* would go on.' He went to Bath, and, introducing himself to the Manager, was permitted to perform *Tressel* in Richard III. He was greatly applauded, but the company being full, he was recommended by the father of Miss Wallis, to Tate Wilkinson at York. With this gentleman he continued one season; having however few opportunities of displaying his talents in the principal characters, and finding by this time, that an actor's, no more than the statesman's bed, is not always a *bed of roses*, he wrote to Dr. Elliston, soliciting his forgiveness; still pleading, however, his partiality for the profession he had adopted, and expressing a desire to try his fortune on the London boards. His uncle *was not made of steel;* his friend Dr. Farmer recommended our young Roscius to his brother commentator George Steevens, who introduced him to Mr. Kemble; that gentleman told him to prepare himself in *Romeo* against the opening of the new Drury Lane theatre; but, too impatient to wait for the workmen, and not being able to feed upon a distant hope, he applied for an engagement to Mr. Dimond the Bath Manager, then performing for a few nights at Richmond. The agreement was settled at once; and, instead of Drury Lane, he performed his *Romeo* at Bath, in the year 1793. His success was complete, and he rose rapidly into favour with the audience. His name was mentioned with high encomiums, and patronage and profit attended his exertions. When the new Drury Lane opened in 1794, enquiry was made as to the terms which would be given him on his joining the company; he was offered *forty shillings* a week; but not chusing to *starve* in the metropolis on a paltry sum, the tardy offer of which was with difficulty obtained through the joint interest of Dr. Farmer, George Steevens, and Mr. Kemble, he preferred living in credit

and affluence at Bath, by the independent exertion of his own unassisted abilities.

Our *Romeo* was soon destined to play the character of a lover on the stage of life; and he found a most lovely and interesting *Juliet*, in the person and accomplishments of Miss Rundall. Some impediments arose to the match, but they were removed by degrees, and their union took place three weeks before Mr. Elliston made his triumphant *debut* on the London stage, in the characters of *Octavian* and *Vapour*. The torch of Hymen has seldom waved over more propitious nuptials. From his own *Honey-moon*, down to Mr. Tobin's, and from thence until this moment, his history presents nothing but a series of good fortune. On and off the stage his career has been uniformly prosperous. His performance of Octavion was greatly admired and followed; and the failure of the *Iron Chest*, with Mr. Kemble in Mortimer, at Drury Lane, and its success when Mr. Elliston played that character at the Hay-Market, (which gave rise to much conversation and criticism) was a circumstance that did the young tragedian essential service. We never were, and we think never can be of opinion, that the condemnation of the *Iron Chest* was owing entirely to the bad acting of Mr. Kemble; but however this may be, the play which *died* on the third night at Drury Lane, was revived by the skill and animation of Mr. Elliston, and he enjoys all the fame of having restored it to the life it now enjoys.

To Mr. Harris, a new face is a sort of *Jack-a-lanthorn*; follow it he must; and it often leads him into a bog, and there leaves him. When the Hay-Market closed, Mr. Elliston was under the necessity of returning to his situation at Bath; but the Covent-Garden proprietor engaged him to play once a fortnight, for a certain number of nights. The celerity of his movements, so necessary to enable him to fulfil his duty, both at Bath, and in London, procured him the appellation of "the *Telegraph*, or Fortnight Actor." This arrangement was soon found to be mutually inconvenient, and after a few nights was abandoned.

He returned to the Hay-Market the ensuing season, and was eminently successful in a variety of opposite characters. The following summers he passed in different parts of the country. Being much countenanced

by the Royal Family, his visits to Weymouth in particular, were very frequent and very profitable: but when Mr. Colman, that he might open his theatre on the 15th of May, resolved on collecting a company of performers entirely from the country, and applied to Mr. Elliston to take the stage management, and the lead as an actor, he was tempted again to return to London; and Mr. Colman's new and hazardous scheme was infinitely indebted for its success to his enterprizing spirit, and the promptitude and versatility of his professional abilities. Mr. Mathews also distingished himself as a comedian of genuine merit.

Mr. Elliston's engagement was for three seasons. At the close of the second summer, having received offers from the proprietors of Drury Lane, such as it had been folly to reject, he obtained the consent of the Bath proprietors to give up a year of his articles, and made his appearance, at length, on the boards of the magnificent theatre in Drury-Lane; not as he would have done in 1794, as "steward, substitute and lowly factor," at *forty shillings* a week; but in *Rolla* the Peruvian General, at a salary and with privileges, seldom before bestowed on any performer. The secession of Mr. Kemble paved the way to Mr. Elliston's promotion to the highest rank, and most enviable honours of his profession.

In the full enjoyment of these honours we now leave him. In the course of this *Publication* we shall have sufficient opportunities of pointing out his particular merits and deficiencies as an actor. He has written one piece for the stage, called the *Venetian Outlaw*, founded on the story of the *Bravo of Venice*. We cannot judge of it as a composition; but we remember that its dramatic effect was very striking, and the applause it received abundant.

Mr. Elliston, we believe, has five or six children; and, if report tells but *half* the truth, the recent death of his respectable uncle, has left him in a state of very handsome independence, in point of fortune.

The portrait which accompanies this sketch, exhibits him as the *Duke*, in the *Honeymoon*.

## MARSHAL RANTZAU.

WHAT contrarieties often occur in the same person! How often the indulgence of one vice, prevents the exertion and the advantage of many good qualities, and of many virtues! Auberi du Maurier, in his "*Memoires de Hambourg*," thus describes the celebrated Marshal Rantzau—"He was a German of high birth, and a General of such great note, that Mazarin used to oppose to the Prince of Condé, when that great Commander had the misfortune to be in arms against his country and his Prince." M. Rantzau possessed admirable qualities both of body and mind. He was tall, fair, and very handsome. To see him only, one would say he was born to command. He was the finest horseman ever beheld. He would hit a single piece of money with a pistol, at a hundred paces distant. He was invincible with the small-sword. He spoke the principal languages of Europe, and had a general taste for the sciences. He was acquainted with all the great Generals of the age, having made war under them from the time he was able to bear arms. He said in conversation many lively things; and as an infallible proof of the force of his eloquence in any council of war in which he ever sat, he always drew over the other members to be of his sentiments, so ably did he support them with powerful reasons. If he spoke well, he wrote still better. To his courage nothing was impossible. He possessed perfect coolness in the greatest danger, and found expedients under the heaviest misfortunes. His liberality procured him the love and esteem of his soldiers, and no General knew how to give his orders so well. But so many excellent and rare virtues were effaced by his great vices. Never was there a more determined debauchee. He loved wine and women to excess, and the most seasoned drinkers were afraid of him. He sought their company from all parts, and no one could equal him in this species of vice. He sometimes remained in a state of insensibility for whole days. The disorder that reigned in his private affairs was inconceivable. He gave away whatever he had about him without discrimination, and he always had much money in his pocket, which he was robbed of during his inebriety.

Thus, like a cask without a bottom, all the riches of India would not have been sufficient for him, and he found himself compelled to sell all his effects for little or nothing. He often lost his best friends for a bon-mot. Du Maurier, who was Rantzau's great friend, told this extraordinary man one day, that his excesses and irregularities would destroy his health, and that they would prevent his rising to the principal employments in the state. "I would not," answered he, darting a most ferocious and haggard look upon Du Maurier, "I would not give up my pleasures to become Emperor of Germany." His excesses, during the siege of Dunkirk by the Spaniards, are thought to have lost that place. He was, however, confined for some time in the castle of Vincennes for this supposed neglect, and was cleared from any imputation of treachery or cowardice. He died soon after his release. During the siege of Gravelines, he had one day appointed the Duke of Orleans, and some of the principal French Nobility, to sup with him. He went, however, in the morning, to pay a visit to the famous Dutch Admiral Van Tromp, where he got so drunk with Malaga wine, that he fell under the table as if he was dead, and was obliged to be put to bed. His Aid-du-camp made an apology to the Duke of Orleans, for his master's not being able to attend him at supper, and put it upon an excessive swell of the sea, which had prevented his leaving the Admiral's ship.

To shew the dangers of ebriety, the catholic legends tell us of some of their Hermits to whom the Devil gave his choice of three crimes; two of them of the most atrocious kind, and the other to be drunk. The poor Saint chose the last, as the least of the three; but when drunk, committed the other two.

The baneful effects of this pernicious vice upon the body are described by the ingenious Dr. Darwin, in his "Zoonomia," under an allegory which would not have disgraced the splendid imagination of Lord Bacon himself.

"Prometheus," says the Doctor, "was painted as stealing fire from Heaven, that might well represent the inflammable spirit produced by fermentation, which may be said to animate or enliven the man of clay; whence the conquests of Bacchus, as well as the temporary mirth and noise of his devotees. But the after-punishment of those who steal this accursed fire, is a

vulture gnawing the liver, and well allegorizes the poor inebriate lingering for years under painful diseases."

And that the graces and energies of poetry may come in aid of the figure so strongly depicted in prose, the same great physiologist, in his "Botanic Garden," in the most sublime imagery, and with the greatest strength of personification, has composed a picture which should be painted and hung up in every chamber dedicated to Bacchanalian festivity.

Dr. Darwin personifies the Goddess of Wine under the name of VITIS, who thus addresses her votaries:

"Drink deep, sweet youth," seductive Vitis cries,
The maudlin tear-drop glistening in her eyes;
Green leaves and purple clusters crown her head,
And the tall thyrsus stays her tott'ring tread:
"Drink deep," she carols, as she waves in air
The mantling goblet, "and forget your care."
O'er the dread feast malignant Chymia scowls,
And mingles poison in the nectar'd bowls.
Fell Gout peeps grinning thro' the flimsy scene,
And bloated Dropsy keeps behind unseen.
Wrapp'd in her robe, white Lepra hides her stains,
And silent Frenzy, writhing, bites his chains.

## THE MELANGE.

### No. 1.

### CHACUN A SON GOUT.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GEOGRAPHY ILLUSTRATED—A pert, illiterate young fellow in Glasgow, who had newly dashed into trade, and given the *loom* the *go-by*, stepped one morning accidentally into a bookseller's shop. He had not staid long before he accosted the shopman with the trite question, 'Any news to day, Sir?' 'Yes,' replied the shopman, 'the Senate of Hamburgh have, it seems, delivered up *Napper Tandy* to the British!' 'Amazing! *Napper Tandy*; I rejoice to hear it (replied the speculator in muslins), *'tis a fine island, 'twill be a good opening for trade. I hope it will never be re-taken.*

The BATTLE of FONTENOY—Comte de Hordt, a native of Sweden, and a Lieutenant General in the Prussian army under Frederick the Great, pays this honourable tribute to the valour of our countrymen, in this battle.

"In this memorable day, the two armies experienced

great losses, but, of all the allies, the English suffered most. We cannot deny them this justice, that it was impossible to march up to an enemy with a countenance more firm, determined, and resolute than that which they displayed; they were cut to pieces, and the ground was covered with their mutilated bodies; they lost a multitude of officers; and after this bloody and terrible battle, all the great families of England were seen to wear mourning. I was sent two or three times to the Duke of Cumberland, with messages from the Prince of Waldeck; and I always found him where the firing was hottest, and at the head of his infantry; neither he nor the corps which he commanded paid any attention to us; they fought as if they stood alone, and retired in the same manner. Two years afterward I had occasion to make the same observation at the battle of Lawfeld. This nation has something singular belonging to it, which distinguishes it from all others. Even their women, who follow their camp, preserve a *sang-froid* in the midst of the greatest dangers, and even when surrounded by the horrors of carnage. To instances of this kind I was witness at the battle of Fontenoy."

Charles XII.—It is well known that his indolence and indifference in his tender years had very generally excited opinions which were highly disadvantageous to him. His grandmother Edwige-Leonora of Holstein was regent during his minority; and this ambitious princess exerted every effort to hold him at a distance from business, leaving him no resource but that of reviewing his troops, or sharing in their exercises. One day, on his return from manœuvring several regiments, the Counsellor of State, Piper, observed that he was plunged in a profound reverie. "Will your Majesty," said he, "permit me to ask what it is that renders you so serious, and of which you are thinking?—I am thinking," replied the Prince, "that I feel myself worthy to command those brave men, and that neither they nor I ought to receive the commands of a woman." In a very short time, Piper fulfilled the wishes which had been so laconically expressed. The states were assembled: the five counsellors of regency proposed to them to acknowledge the majority of the young king: no one ventured to oppose the suggestion, and the government was vested in him. Three days sufficed to Charles XII. and his minister, to strip the queen of all her authority.

## SUGGESTIONS ON THE ART OF READING POETRY, AND ESPECIALLY THE POETRY OF MILTON.

It has been observed by Pope, that "of all the English poets, Shakspeare presents the fullest and fairest field for criticism." With equal truth, and less equivocal compliment, we may assert, of Milton, that no other poet affords so wide a scope for graceful and sonorous enunciation, in all that variety of tones which is essential to genuine harmony, and the perfection of oral eloquence. Any reference to Greek or Latin composition would be foreign from the present design, though, perhaps, we might easily shew that the uniform return of the Spondee, in the last foot, and of the Dactyl, in the last but one, of the Hexameter, imposes on the ancient metre a clog, not indeed so burthensome and barbarous as that of rhyme, but sufficient to preclude a competition with the freedom and energy of the English heroic, as framed and ennobled by the scientific genius of Milton.

There is a trite notion, deriving fallacious credit from some great names, that the numbers of our illustrious Epic Poet are inharmonious; this imputation, proceeding first from a vitiated taste in Dryden, has been renewed by Dr. Johnson, from a mixed principle; capriciousness of sentiment, and an ear not framed to perceive, or relish, the charms of this poet's melody; in which peculiar excellence, I believe he will be found to surpass all his competitors, Shakspeare alone excepted, as far as he, unquestionably, transcends them in the vigour, compass, and sublimity of his imagination. As a decisive testimony, of this alleged imperfection in the structure of Milton's verse, his biographical critic observes that there are only a few happy Readers who can recite the Paradise Lost, well; but the remark itself implies a concession of which the objector seems not to have been aware, for it admits that the poem may be well read, provided the reader be qualified for his office, and so, the defect is not in the versification, but in him who utters it: with as much fairness might we condemn some rare and exquisite piece of music because an adequate performer could not readily be found to execute it: the truth is, this acknowledged difficulty of reading Milton, so far

from being any proof of the poet's unskilfulness, is an evidence of his consummate art; as resulting from that wonderful variety of pauses, inflections, and emphases which distinguish his metre, and form one of its noblest characteristics: still, however, the difficulty of the reading remains; to remove or lessen which is the object of the present endeavour.

We have heard it said, that the art of reading poetry is now either unknown, or entirely neglected among us; and the cause of this ignorance, or neglect, is, with much plausibility, ascribed by a respectable Critic * to that revolution produced about sixty years ago, on the English stage, by Mr. Garrick; who, willing to depreciate a talent which probably he did not possess, contrived to bring measured and harmonious recitation into disrepute: there is, certainly, much cogency in this remark, since it has been acknowledged, that, with all his skill, and the wonderful effects ascribed to that gentleman's acting, he was by constitution, or a natural deficiency of voice, unable to acquire reputation as a declaimer.

Yet it may be that elocution was declining, at the period alluded to, was beginning to assume a pompous, unnatural sort of gait or march, more adapted to the termination of the lines than to the sense and spirit of the subject, or the true melody of the numbers, and thereby afforded an easy victory to the popular and politic reformer, who would not fail to employ satire on the occasion, and complete his triumph over the exploded system, by overcharged and ludicrous imitation.

But whether Betterton and Booth, as well as Quin, were really masters, or not, in this art, is a question that, like all others on which no document exists to direct our judgment, beside what vague tradition can furnish, must remain for ever dubious. That unwritten eloquence which aids and ennobles Justice herself, at the bar; which wields and decides the fate of empires in the senate; and, from the pulpit, can elevate to heaven the spirit of devotion, is but a lambent flame, frail, even as his, the poor player

> " That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> " And then is heard no more.

---

* Sir Brook Boothby---Preface to his translation of Britannicus.

Those speaking looks and gestures, more impressive, and often more perspicuous than any words, that untaught language of the soul which arrests at once, and chains attention, those tones that vibrate on the nerves, and are the master-key to every passage and recess of the heart, must yield up their transient energies; must perish, with the breath that animated them,

> " And like some unsubstantial pageant faded,
> " Leave not a rack behind*.

In addition to the obvious requisites for good reading, a perfect knowledge of the author, and the skill and discernment to trace and recognise him through every subtility and variation of meaning, the reader of Milton should possess a voice, at once smooth, clear, strong, flexible, and comprehensive, capable of sounding every note, whether of grave or impassioned language, and, under the sympathetic guidance of an ear always true, refined, and delicate, pronouncing with unfailing euphony, sentences differently allied, in periods, unequally, and often very widely extended;† but perfection, that ideal climax, that still-retiring phantom of human pursuit, has no rational approach but by degrees, and it may be consoling to those who would enter on the arduous task here proposed, to reflect that, while many of the objects which toilsome science aims at are followed through paths that lead to pain, disease, and death, the endeavour after just elocution not only strengthens and improves those peculiar faculties by which it is to be attained, but contributes materially to our general health: public speaking, with just and natural action, as it affords the most salutary exercise to the lungs, will add strength, animation, and activity to the whole frame: and such advantage will be found to result, in an unrivalled measure, from the pages of Milton; who may thus be said to evince more conspicuously than any other poet, the double Godhead of Apollo.

To read The Paradise Lost, properly, it will be necessary first of all to note and consider the various

---

† The utter want of such a voice has led an actor of great genius, taste, discrimination and force, to substitute for natural enunciation, a lamentable sort of chanting or recitative, continually imposing false cadences, and which all his other merits are hardly sufficient to render tolerable.

modes of speech contained in it: these may be named and set down according to their several degrees of importance, in the following order:

First the *Dramatic* style, of all the most animated; in which some character is produced speaking in his own person, as Satan in Pandemonium

" Is this the region, this the soil, the clime," &c.

Secondly, the Vocative, in which the poet addresses the Muse, or some other personage or power, as in the opening of the same poem

" And chiefly thou, O spirit! that dost prefer," &c.

Thirdly the Descriptive, which is of two sorts; one abstracted or remote, the other particular, and, as it were, present: of the latter kind, by far the more spirited, and approaching nearly to the dramatic, is the picture given of the infernal regions, of Satan and his crew——

" At once, as far as angels' ken he views
" The dismal situation," &c.

The remote description may be illustrated by the representation given of Eden, in the Fourth Book——

" Southward thro' Eden went a river large,
" Nor chang'd his course, but thro' the shaggy hill
" Pass'd underneath ingulft."

Fourthly the Narrative, as when the poet relates any historical or fabulous tale, such as the account of the heathen idols ——

" First Moloch, horrid king!" &c.

and lastly the Declarative, in which some acknowledged doctrine, fact, or opinion is stated, as——

Spirits when they please
" Can either sex assume or both, so soft
" And uncompounded is their essence pure."*

EDWARD HICKEY SEYMOUR.

*(This Subject will be resumed in the next Number.)*

---

* Perhaps a sixth mode might be distinguished, in which the Poet introduces himself, personally; as in the opening of the third book, where Milton, emerging from the gloomy terrors of the infernal world, salutes the cheerful day, in strains, not less melodious than sublime ——

" Hail holy light!" &c.

I am well aware of the censure which some morose critics are

# EDWARD AND MARY,

## A DOMESTIC STORY.

**Founded on recent Circumstances.**

EDWARD was the eldest son of a rich merchant; Mary the only child of a respectable gentleman, who lived upon a moderate fortune in a retired village, (not far from the metropolis,) where the merchant had a country seat; but having more liberality than prudence he became the easy dupe of pretended friends, and died suddenly when his daughter was little more than sixteen years of age, leaving her without the smallest provision for her support. Mary was beautiful, amiable and accomplished. Edward had for some time felt a passion for her, which was increased by this sad reverse in her expectations. His father, he knew, was ambitious and fond of money. Hopeless, therefore, of his consent, he made an offer of his hand to Mary; and she, poor and unprotected, consented to become his wife. She loved the person, and esteemed the virtues of her Edward. These she long had known; but she knew not yet the relentless character of his father. The name of Edward was instantly expunged from his will, a small sum was sent to him by a servant, and the paternal door was closed against him---for ever.

It is sweet to labour for those we love. Though intended for a mercantile life, Edward's education had been liberal. For two or three years his literary abilities procured them a scanty support. During this interval

---

ready to pass upon this address, on account of the personal allusion in it: but from factitious and arbitrary rules there is always open an appeal to sense and nature; and if, among the multitude of readers, the most callous-nerved relax in tenderness at this pathetic descant of the poet on his own blindness, the objection must at once be withdrawn, or left to famish on the barrenness of cavil; on words without meaning, or argument without consistency.

he made frequent attempts to obtain his father's forgiveness, but in vain ; he continued inexorable. This had a gradual effect on Edward's spirits ; his health, from the sedentary nature of his occupation, began to decline ; and soon after the birth of his third child, he was seized with a fever that threatened to be fatal. The poor Mary was always by his bed-side. Though her heart was ready to break, she constantly spoke the words of hope and comfort to her husband ; and only when he had fallen into a short slumber, would she give vent to the affliction which almost overwhelmed her. Then would the suppressed tears burst forth, and bedew the cheek of the innocent babe that clung to her breast, and as she wiped them off, the unconscious infant would look up and smile in her mother's face ; this, instead of relieving, gave additional poignancy to her grief. At length her husband's disorder abated ; but it was necessary that he should remove a little way into the country. What gives stronger energies than connubial affection ? Mary soon contrived every thing. Two rooms were hired in a small cottage near Epping Forest, and thither, accompanied by a female domestic, this distressed family removed.

Edward derived benefit from the change of air, and was nearly recovered ; but their little stock was reduced to a solitary guinea. *Want*, he had never yet felt ; its aspect was frightful, and the apprehension that his wife, now doubly dear to him, and his three helpless children, might shortly be without common nourishment, brought with it a train of reflections that were intolerable. He resolved to make a last and solemn application to his opulent father, and endeavour to " knock at nature in his heart." He made known his intention to his wife, who, with much hesitation, and many tears and embraces, at length permitted him to set out. Early in the evening he promised to return.

Agitated with a thousand hopes and fears Mary passed a melancholy day. It was about the middle of December, and the night was drawing on. She put her little family to bed. The eldest was a fine boy of three years old ; the second, another boy, somewhat more than a year younger ; the last, as before observed, a blooming female infant at the breast. The time of her Edward's return approached. How did she count each passing minute ! In a quarter of an hour she expected

to clasp her beloved in her arms. You only who have passed an interval of absence from the dearest object of your affections can judge of Mary's anxiety. The night too was dark and tempestuous "Loud was the wind, and the rain beat hard against the casement." She had prepared a little supper to talk over the hoped-for success of her husband's application. The clock struck nine; but he did not return. She opened the window, and looked towards the forest; no object attracted her view, no sound of footsteps arrested her ear. Mary's heart died within her. "Yet why should I be alarmed?" she asked herself. "Some happy circumstance per-"haps has delayed him; his father is kind; their re-"conciliation has detained him beyond the time he "had appointed. Shortly I shall see him, his counte-"nance beaming with joy; his heart overflowing with "rapture; or it may be that he has missed the convey-"ance he expected;--or perhaps"--Here a sigh escaped her---Her thoughts had pursued an opposite direction, and she was afraid to follow them. The success of his journey formed no longer the subject of her contemplation. The gloomiest apprehensions had taken possession of her mind, and *but to see him in safety* was all the felicity she desired.

Another hour elapsed. The pulsations of her heart began to beat quick, and she paced the room in great disorder. Now and then the sight of her pretty babes caused her to stop. Twice she knelt down, and kissed their little foreheads; then turning her eyes to heaven seemed to invoke the Almighty blessing and protection. Again she opened the window, and for some time listened attentively, then closing it, with a mournful motion of the head, sank into her chair in hopeless dejection; her elbow reposed on the table; her hand pressed her throbbing temples; while her eye, beginning to assume a frightful vacancy---wandered over the ruddy countenances of her infants as they lay, gently-breathing, before her. At length she thought she heard a confused sound of voices from the forest; it drew nearer; she tried to rise, but could not---terror fixed her to the spot. A loud knocking ensued, and in a few moments the door of her chamber was opened by a poor labourer, and an elderly gentleman leading in her husband, pale, speechless, and bloody. Mary uttered a fearful shriek. Never shall I forget that heart-

rending exclamation. Edward was in the agonies of death, he staggered to the bed where his children slept, hung a few moments on their lips, which he seemed to quit only through weakness; and clasping the hand of his senseless wife, fell back exhausted with the effort, and expired.

The senses of poor Mary are quite gone----and I fear for ever. As soon as she recovered from her first swoon, she called aloud for her Edward. She flew to the next room to which we had removed his body, parted his hair, kissed his lips and temples, and talked to him as if he had been still sensible to her conversation and endearments. "Edward, my love, my protector, my "husband---you must not leave me---your father never "will acknowledge me---*my* hands shall procure food "and cloathing. Do not depart. The nights are cold "and dark, the forest dreary and dangerous. Edward, "awake my life---still, still, we may be happy."

This affecting scene almost overpowered me. I sent for such assistance as the melancholy occasion required, and confided the unhappy Mary into proper hands. She is now removed where every attention will be afforded her; but the physicians give no hope of her recovery; her malady seems beyond the reach of their art. In the room where she is confined, there is a small window which several times in the day she opens, and after straining her eye-balls till they seem almost starting from her head, as if in search of her husband, she carefully closes the casement, and placing her arm upon the table, falls into the attitude I have before described, in which she sometimes continues, as I am told, many hours.

I visit her once a week, but she has no recollection of me, and, what seems extraordinary, never mentions her children, who, happily, too young to feel their misfortunes, are improving in health and knowledge under the care of a worthy school-master, with whom I have prevailed on their grandfather, with much difficulty, to place them, and to make them, as well as their mother, a decent allowance.

The particulars of this history I gathered from the nurse who attended them in their retreat, I have a house three or four miles further on the road from town, and was returning thither on horseback when the starting of the animal, followed by two or three deep groans,

induced me to alight. The groans, alas! proceeded from Edward. In a few minutes an honest rustic came up, and assisted me in conveying the wounded man home, whither he had just sufficient articulation to direct us.

From a letter that was found in his pocket, and a pistol near him that had been newly discharged, it appeared that his appeal to his father had been ineffectual; he had advanced on his return home within less than a quarter of a mile from the cottage, when no doubt the dreadful destiny to which his wife and family seemed doomed, and the horror of meeting his Mary thus pennyless, deserted, and hopeless, urged him to commit a crime which man may pity---but Heaven alone can *pardon!*

Feb. 1807. T. C.

---

# RECOLLECTIONS OF A LECTURE

## ON THE CONDUCT OF THE UNDERSTANDING;

## READ AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION,

### BY THE REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

I HINTED in my last lecture, that it was my intention to conclude the present course with some observations upon the conduct of the understanding; at the same time I observed, that what I had to offer upon the subject, must be considered, in such an audience, to apply only to the juvenile part of it, and that all I could hope would be, to drop a few seeds in a favourable soil, which might yield a large increase in a proper season.

In a consideration of mental power, a question occurs whether the differences between mind and mind are owing to cultivation solely, or there be something in the transmission from sire to son, which, like the qualities in other animals, appertain to the race, and possess an inherent superiority not to be debased or altered. If, for instance, we should place the eggs of a wild duck under a mother who is tame, I understand, and can readily believe, that the progeny would be considerably more wild than any from the eggs of the domestic fowl. In the colt of an Arabian, we find more spirit and other valuable qualities than on common occasions, not

from the principle of imitation, for the son has never seen its father, but thát the properties of the sire are communicated to the offspring, and that, independently of cultivation, he set out with an advantage derived from the nature of his origin. But to drop the question whether all minds are originally the same, there can be no doubt that they do progressively display remarkable differences; and it is my province to notice some of the prominent causes which lead to mental inferiority; and are the barriers to the improvement of the understanding. The first and most important of these is indolence. We are astonished and offended by a call to re-examine any opinion; the acquiescence in our first thoughts is so easy and delightful, that we hate the occasion of our alarm; and resist the charge to fight the battle again, in our imaginary repose upon the lap of victory. Another co-operant cause is vanity; it is so because we have thus decided it---' What when I have taken so much pains to attain the truth upon any point, shall a new enquiry pretend to confute me? shall I be obliged to confess the superior industry, and what may be more mortifying, the superior penetration of one whose name is hardly known, and whose powers I have despised---no! I determine not to be convinced, be his reasons what they may; it is sufficient that my opinions are mine, I have decided the question, and it must be so.'

Words themselves form a third barrier to the attainment of truth—the progress of the understanding—words with their associations. In our youth we hear particular words associated with particular events, and the terms never recur without their associations—One has heard or read the most deplorable excesses combined with the terms Dissenter, or Turk, or Catholic—and in consequence the mind, regardless of the progress of events, of the changes of time, or the operations of religion and philosophy, persists in the association, though the actions no longer accompany the terms—we are blind to the alterations of manners, and the differences of passions and interests, and retain those prejudices in a liberal age, which were justly formed in an age of persecution—but surely, seeing the fatal results from words, we ought to be particularly careful of their exact meaning, and when we remember the torments, the murders, the massacres to which a word

has given rise, should be cautious that we do not, by a misapplication of terms, encrease the misunderstandings between nation and nation, and man and man, and poison, by wrong association, the fraternal peace of the universe.

The first great step to the cultivation of the understanding is to get a habit of study. I know that at first severe application is a painful thing, that, like the relish for olives and coffee, it is only acquired by perseverance; but I say persevere, and you will acquire it---nothing is to be done without it; take your Livy, work yourself so into the lively events which he places before you, that you see his scenery, and become acquainted with his heroes; let your abstraction be such, that upon a sudden knock at your door you are startled and alarmed at the interruption, and for a second or two doubt whether you are in your own study with a classic in your hand, or upon the plains of Lombardy gazing at the hard and weather-beaten countenance of Hannibal. Read, if possible, so intensely, that the morning shall have passed away two hours before you imagined it was finished, and let many a night be given to enquiry and meditation. The trophies of Miltiades drive away sleep. Indifference is a great enemy to our progress. We have heard that light travels so many feet in a second of time, and that sound also travels a certain distance in the same period. Well, but you say 'I do not care how they travel, and I do not want to know—light is light, and sound sound--they both have their common operations upon me, and I wish to know nothing more about them'--but begin to enquire into their velocity and you will care; by degrees you will dread an interruption of the train of thought about them, and value time only as the means of extending your knowledge. But the great bar to improvement is what may be called a languid study; that indolent and remitted occupation which acquires nothing, and leaves us only disgusted by a fruitless effort. To profit by study we should determine to possess; for it is like a nettle, he who presses its surface lightly only stings his fingers; to grasp it firmly is the only way to escape its mischief, and to hold it safe.

A great deal has been said about the question, whether we should have stated hours of study, or commit ourselves to occasional application---he who can be

sure of his desire to apply at all times may trust himself to opportunities, but in general it is better to limit the irregular fancy of man. This may be a safe recommendation, Do as you please, so as you please to do right. The truth is that a little hard thinking will overcome the tendency of the mind to dissipation---by hard thinking I mean a determination to confine the fancy, and to this effect shake yourself, try to rivet your attention---it flies off---never mind, it will return---the images which perpetually float before it become less frequent, and you are finally absorbed in the object of your study. The mind of man is like a restive colt; all your effort is to keep it in the track from which it is constantly flying off.

A question has arisen among studious men, whether it is better to read with a pen in your hand, or trust to the recollection?---for my part, I own I do not think much has ever been done by this habit of writing out the striking passages of your author; in the first place, it is perfectly clear that the mind is too much employed upon a particular part to seize with any ardour the spirit of the whole---in the next place, I have not found that the practice of writing leaves much impression on the memory; we admire a thing as we read it, but we copy without much intelligence; and, again, these extracts are seldom reviewed, and not readily applied. All that we know is that such an author has said a fine thing upon a particular subject, which we have copied out; our wit is in a common place book, locked up in a bureau, and could we get at it, would enable us to shine very brightly indeed--the worst part of this practice is that it leads us never to trust to memory, and ends with impoverishing our store, and impairing the faculty. Another question frequently discussed, is the preference of conversation or reading in the cultivation of the understanding; they have each their advantages and disadvantages. In consulting our book we find much that we do not want to be told, and grow tired with what appears to overlay the subject---again, doubts cross our minds, which are not anticipated by the author, and we desist with dissatisfaction from a useless enquiry. When we consult the living folio, on the contrary, we find at all events some answer given to our queries, and some opinions thrown out, which either silence our doubts, or correct our notions--it is true, in these conferences some

warmth is frequently produced by differences of opinion, and obstinacy and vanity prevent our conviction and improvement, or the mind becomes soured as the understanding is satisfied--besides, men are apt to prose a good deal upon favourite notions, and we may wish to get rid of the subject, or the speaker, or both, without the power to do so---If an author grows dull our remedy is easy, we have only to dogs-ear our book, and toss it away---an act which it might not be so easy, or so safe, to attempt with our living annoyance.

In the course of my experience I have found very few good *listeners;* and this is not favourable to the cultivation of the understanding. In young men particularly, the self-sufficiency which can only be lowered by deep acquirements and much experience, is apt to fly out in rude and petulant contradiction. I have found one practice greatly contribute to the cure of this propensity, at all events it had that effect upon me when a young man. I determined to allow the opinions of the two first persons I met with every day---nay more, not merely to admit them, but to indulge the complacency of the parties by taking them up, throwing upon them too every additional light which I was able, and by this means not merely check the spirit of contradiction, but gratify my friends, and exercise my own fancy. He who perseveres in this kindly course may rely upon his cure. But there is much that must be always left to experience----observation of mankind teaches the particular weight which belongs to rank and profession---a man measures himself against power and situation, and sees with what discount his opinions may be received.

But the great guide of study is, never to force the understanding to a pursuit to which your powers do not impel you. Always do the thing for which you are fitted, it is the only chance of doing it well, and remember that excellence alone is desirable in any thing---he who has a genius only for composing posies on rings and mottoes for twelfth cakes, if he does them well, let him continue to do them---for always remember that a good motto is a better thing than a bad Epic Poem. A good deal of injury is done to the advancement of knowledge, by the prejudice which men of study acquire against pursuits of a nature different from their own. The man of wit has an abhorrence of scientific labour and precision. The man of science looks upon the

gayer provinces of study as frivolous and unworthy; but they are both mistaken---every branch of the tree has its value--every avenue to knowledge leads to the highest of all possible objects; they all conduct to the same end, the improvement of the human understanding, and, in that, of the happiness of the whole human race.

By *caution* many men contrive to cut very respectable figures with very humble pretensions---the whole effort of such men is to seize an occasion---they never let themselves down the stream of a wide and general conversation---they wait for an eddy to bring a light object within their reach. Such persons never fight but with all the odds in their favour, they never strike but upon a vantage ground, and only combat a weak enemy---these men do much with little, and, never risking any thing, put out every shilling of their small capital at compound interest.

At the close of this course, and which terminates also the lectures of the season, I feel myself called upon to notice a new institution of this nature at the other end of the capital. Thoroughly convinced as I am of the great utility of such institutions, it is my earnest wish that they may all flourish and promote the knowledge of science among us---and this I have no doubt they will do, so long as they are managed upon the enlightened principles which govern our own, and consequently have lecturers of ability, to read upon the different branches of learning. I have heard a good deal of what appears to me sour and flimsy reasoning against such institutions. 'What,' say these objectors, 'would you have the whole community Newtons and Lockes? can you hope to produce any thing more than a race of smatterers in learning?' To this I answer, we all begin by being smatterers---what I hope and believe to be the result of these institutions is, that some are called to consider subjects, upon which before they bestowed little or no attention, and that a disposition to study has here found assistance and direction. Is it nothing, I ask, to interest such an assemblage in a question of science, of taste, or morals? If it did nothing beyond, is it nothing to relieve the mind from its worst enemy, idleness? Such a mode of reasoning is extremely perverse, and would be thought absurd upon any other occasion. What! will you do no good because you cannot do all? If you plant 50,000 young oaks in so

many acres is not your chance greater than if you plant only 10? If I were to be cast upon a foreign shore, and should discover myriads of eggs, should I infer from this the scarcity of fowls?---or would it be fair to argue that wherever there was a multitude of children men and women were a rare commodity? It were a waste of valuable time to combat a shadow like this. Let us therefore proceed to multiply the means of knowlege, and conspire, for the noblest of all purposes, the attainment of truth---convinced that we there acquire a good which can never be sullied or changed---against which calamity, and poverty, and disease, shall never prevail, the only consolation in our dejection, the proudest boast of our exaltation---the distinguishing attribute of our nature, and the rational end and object of our existence.

---

## PERSONAL IDENTITY.

WE are born, it is said, with the seeds or principles of dissolution in our frame, which continue to operate from our births to our deaths; so that in this sense we may be said to die daily. But, I think, we may be said to die daily in another sense; and that is, in the change we are always undergoing in our persons, tempers, and manners, which makes us, in the different stages of our lives, quite different beings:---which makes, if I may so say, one self to be continually dying, while another self is as continually growing out of it.

Let me illustrate this reflection, by what gave rise to it.---A boy of three years old was playing before me the other day, upon whom a matron gazed with uncommon fondness, because he bears a striking resemblance to what her own son, who is fifteen, was at that age; and who, it is certain, would not now excite in her the fondness, that this strange child does. She owned it was so; and I told her what I supposed to be the reason, viz. that she viewed the little boy as the image of a being, who once existed, but whom she now considered as no more; and recollected only with that desiderium or longing fondness, with which we call up the images of departed friends or relations. And, added I, "there "is between the two objects not the difference which at "first sight there may seem to be: for your son at "three years old, whom this little boy resembles, was

" as different from what he is now, as if he were a " different being. Nay, though a being with his name " and connections hath grown out of him, and still sub- " sists, was he not really a different being? and is not " his then-self dead, as his now-self will be twenty " years hence?"---It seems to me, that this sentiment and reasoning may be applied to every moment of our lives: by the continual flux our material part is in, we are every moment laying aside one self and assuming another self, every moment dying and reviving. Death therefore is not so much laying aside our old bodies (for this we have been doing all our lives) as ceasing to assume new ones.

Let me add another illustration of the above, from an affair between two boys, in which there is nothing fictitious but the names. When William left London, and went into the North, he wept at parting with his friend and companion, Tommy. He enquired frequently and affectionately after Tommy; he longed to see him again; and, after two years absence, he did see him. But he did not meet him so warmly as was expected: on the contrary, he looked dismayed, as if disappointed; and his behaviour to him was somewhat cold and distant. Being asked the reason, he replied, that " this was not Tommy, at least the Tommy " he left; and that he should love him as well as " ever, if he looked more like Tommy." The truth is, Tommy's stature was increased, and his features altered; and William no longer acknowledged the identity of his friend, but thought him another person; at least the same as another person, because not presenting the idea he had been accustomed to be fond of. Just so, I suppose, I may love my mother, under that image which she bore in 1758, when she died; but were my mother to be presented to me, all decrepit and withered with age, as she would have been now in 1807, I could scarcely fancy her the lively pretty woman, who used to caress me, and whom under that form I used to love. In short, she would appear a new person, a new being; and, though I might from reason esteem her as my mother, yet I should feel none of that love which instinct produces.

Upon the whole, therefore, did not Locke determine rightly, when he made personal identity to consist in consciousness?

S.

## ALESANDRO STRADELLA.

SOME of the occurrences in the life of this celebrated Musician are so extraordinary, that I think they will be found not uninteresting to the readers of the *Cabinet*.

Stradella was, for several years, composer to the Opera at Venice, where his reputation as a musician was deservedly high, for he was not only an excellent composer, but a very fine singer and performer on the harp, with which he frequently used to accompany his songs on the stage.

A young lady, named Hortensia, although of a noble family of Venice, lived at this time in a disreputable way with a Venetian nobleman. She was exquisitely beautiful, and perfectly accomplished. Stradella, the most eminent professor in Venice, was her instructor in music. It was scarcely possible for such a man to have such a pupil without feeling some sensations different from those of a master, and she soon began to look on Stradella more as her lover than her instructor. Convinced that if they continued in Venice, the jealousy of the nobleman who was the former object of her affections must soon be excited, and well knowing the deadly spirit of revenge which such a discovery would infallibly generate, they resolved to leave the city privately. The plan was no sooner formed than executed. They left Venice by night, and travelled without stopping till they arrived at Rome. Here the vigilance of the Venetian soon discovered them, and he took the usual Italian method to revenge himself, by hiring two assassins, who were instructed to murder both Stradella and Hortensia; and in order to protect them from punishment, they were furnished with letters to the Venetian Ambassador at Rome. On their arrival there, they learned that an oratorio of Stradella's was, on the following day, to be performed in the church of St. John Lateran; they resolved accordingly to attend it, and to dispatch their victims on leaving the church. They had not been long seated before they began, in common with the rest of the audience, to admire the sublime composition then performing, with the excellence and grandeur of which they were so struck, that, seized with remorse at the deed they were about to perpetrate, they reflected with horror on the thought of assassinating

a man who could impart to his hearers such exquisite pleasure. They looked on Stradella as little short of a divinity, and instead of murdering, were almost prepared to adore him. When the oratorio was finished, as Stradella and Hortensia were leaving the church, they were accosted by the assassins, who, after thanking Stradella for the pleasure and delight they had just received from his music, disclosed to him the dreadful purpose on which they had been sent, and declared to him that, instead of taking away either his life or that of his mistress, they would employ every method for their preservation. They related all that had passed between themselves and the Venetian, and earnestly intreated that Stradella, and his fair companion, would leave Rome immediately, promising that they would deceive their employer by informing him that the objects of his vengeance had left Rome on the morning previous to their arrival. The loss of their reward, which was to have been very large, they considered as amply compensated by the exquisite pleasure and gratification they had just received. Stradella and Hortensia, after expressing their gratitude to the preservers of their lives, determined on immediately quitting Rome, and seeking for safety at Turin. Their intended murderers returned to Venice, and informed their employer that the objects of his vengeance had left Rome for Turin, where the laws against assassins were so severe, that they had not dared to follow them; the house of the ambassador being the only place that could afford protection; advising him, at the same time, to give up the hope of their assassination, which they refused to undertake for any addition to their reward.

This disappointment served but to "whet the blunted purpose" of the savage Venetian; he contrived to engage in his interest the father of Hortensia, who, with a mind still more diabolical and vindictive, united in the plot to be the murderer of his own daughter.

In order to effect this savage purpose, he himself, accompanied by two other ruffians, went to Turin, having been previously furnished with letters by the Venetian from the French Ambassador at Venice, to the Marquis of Villars, then French Ambassador at Turin, which requested his protection for the bearers, who were stated to be merchants.

On the arrival of Stradella and Hortensia at Turin,

they put themselves under the protection of the Duchess of Savoy, then regent there, who, as soon as she had been informed of their story, placed the lady in a convent, as the most secure asylum from the designs of her persecutors, and appointed Stradella her first musician. Here they lived for some time in the enjoyment of prosperity and happiness, and, favoured with the patronage and protection of the duchess regent, they almost forgot the malice and cruelty of their persecutors. This fancied dream of security, was not however of long duration, for as Stradella was one evening walking on the ramparts of the city, he was attacked by the father of his mistress and the two ruffians, who each wounded him with their poniards in the breast, and immediately fled to the house of the French Ambassador for protection. This atrocious act having been perpetrated in the sight of many spectators, occasioned great indignation in the city, and having soon come to the knowledge of the regent, she gave instant orders for the gates of the city to be shut, and the most diligent search to be made for the assassins. They were soon discovered to have taken refuge at the house of the Marquis of Villars, who insisted on his privilege, and refused to deliver them up; he wrote, however, to the French Ambassador at Venice, to know further particulars respecting the persons who had attempted to murder a man so much beloved and admired as Stradella. He was answered by the ambassador, that the men were unknown to him any further than that they had been very strongly recommended to him by the Venetian nobleman. In the mean while Stradella, who happily had received no dangerous wound, recovered, and the Marquis of Villars suffered the ruffians to escape.

Another disappointment served only still more to enrage the Venetian, who employed spies to watch every motion of these unhappy lovers, and to give him intelligence when a more certain and more fatal blow might be struck. A year after the attack on Stradella, the duchess regent gave her sanction to his union with Hortensia, and they were accordingly married at Turin. Soon after their nuptials had taken place they travelled as far as Genoa, intending, after a short stay there, to return to Turin. But the Venetian, having intelligence of their departure, again dispatched after them two assassins,

accompanied by Hortensia's father, who reached Genoa the morning after Stradella and his wife had arrived, and having traced this unfortunate couple to the house where they lodged, entered a chamber where they were sitting, and in an instant stabbed them both to the heart. The assassins, having accomplished their purpose, escaped to a vessel which they had provided, in which they immediately set sail, and were never afterwards heard of.

*Norwich*, Jan. 30, 1807.* E. D.

---

## THE ARTS.

BY way of introduction to what will occasionally appear under this title in the *Cabinet*, it may be proper to make a few brief remarks on the present state of the Arts in this country. If they are not in the most flourishing condition, it certainly is not owing to any want of genius in the professors, who have produced, and are producing, under very unfavourable circumstances, the most brilliant specimens of skill in every department of painting. Considered as a body, the English artists may contest and bear away the palm from any of the rival nations of Europe.†

It cannot however be denied that the national patronage is too limited and meagre to give the requisite energy to the Fine Arts§. Our public institutions are

---

* Mr. Hayley has amplified the circumstances of this tale into a poem, which was lately published under the title of the *Triumphs of Musick*.

† "From the productions of living genius at this moment in Great Britain, might be produced examples of excellence in every department of art, that would adorn the noblest collections, and reflect honour on any age or nation."

SHEE's *Rhymes of Art*.

§ "Though the wreath of art has for some years bloomed upon the brows of Britain, it must be confessed, that neither the spirit of the times, nor the liberality of the state have much contributed to place it there. If she has excelled her neighbours in every department of painting; in history, portrait and landscape; if she has displayed a power, a vigour, a spirit, a richness of effect in water coloured drawings, which rival the productions of the easel, and surpass the efforts of every other age and na-

few, and the establishments on which they are formed, by no means adequate to the important objects they were designed to promote. The ROYAL ACADEMY, though sanctioned by the countenance of the KING, has long been considered as little better than an *Exhibition Room*. The BRITISH INSTITUTION, promising as it does to assist the reputation, and benefit the pockets of our artists, is yet but in its infancy. Although many persons of rank and property appear to be warmly interested in its success, it wants the invigorating interference of the government to render its advantages permanent, and to fix it on a scale consistent with the dignity of the Arts, and the glory of the British Empire.*

From the Academic Correspondence for 1803, most laudably and diligently collected by Prince Hoare, Esq. a gentleman to whom literature and the fine arts are so variously indebted, it appears that the artists in Russia enjoy the most honourable and liberal consideration from the Emperor Alexander. "The munifi-"cence of our sovereign" says the Secretary of the Imperial Academy at Petersburgh, in his letter to Mr. Hoare, "is unquestionably the most solid and infallible support that can be found for the advancement of our artists. Influenced by this principle, His Majesty, the reigning Emperor, has deigned not only to increase the salaries of the professors and other persons employed in the Academy, but still further to extend his bounty, by lately appro-

---

tion; to her genius, her unfostered, unaided, uninvigorated genius the praise is due. We have seen no great exertions of power to stimulate ambition, or to reward desert; there have been no fruits forced in the hot-beds of patronage; individuals have done every thing---the nation nothing."---*ibid.*

* "Amongst the ancients or the moderns, in Greece, Italy or in France, under Louis the fourteenth, it was neither the agency of the commercial spirit, nor even the more congenial operation of private patronage that kindled those lights of genius which irradiate with such splendour the hemisphere of taste. The spark was struck by a collision more exalted. The impulse was given from above---from all that was powerful in the state respecting all that was ingenious in the time; attending with solitude to the birth of ability, fostering and invigorating the first struggles of his weakness----stimulating and rewarding the utmost exertions of his strength---setting an example of homage to genius, which rescued him from the ever ready contumely of vulgar greatness, and taught him to respect himself."---*ibid.*

priating, for the maintenance of this institution the annual sum of 146,000 roubles instead of 60,000, formerly assigned for that purpose, and by moreover adding the yearly sum of 10,000 roubles, for the payment of those artists whose works shall be judged worthy of adorning the public institutions." Several of the members of the academy have, also, been recently decorated with various orders of the empire.

The neglect of living artists,* and their productions, presents another lamentable obstacle to the advancement of the arts. Our native genius languishes and desponds under this almost exclusive preference of foreign performances; being often obliged to descend from the noble heights he is so desirous of occupying, to grovel in the humblest and most degrading paths of the art. Such is the rage for old pictures of the *foreign* schools that, to satisfy the cravings of amateurs and connoiseurs " *amateurs sans amour, et connoiseurs sans connois-* " *sance*" (to use the happy definition of Count de Stronganoff, the President of the Russian Academy) even the English painter is sometimes employed in their fabrication; and thus suffers the double mortification of being compelled to assist the purposes of venality and fraud, and, by his own act, to degrade the art he honours, and add to the impediments which obstruct its progress in his native country. This shameful encouragement of *Picture dealers* is very feelingly deplored and deprecated by Mr. SHEE, in his *Rhymes of Art*, a production which we know not whether it does him more honour as a *poet* than an *artist (in utrumque paratus)* and which, as our readers will perceive, has supplied many of the observations that form the subject of this paper.

Such are some of the causes which operate to the prejudice of the arts in England; still, however, from the fine genius and elastic spirit of our painters, much has been effected; and there is even some reason to hope that the present administration, more favourable, we trust, to the interests of literature and the polite arts

* Mr. West, now restored to the chair of the Royal Academy, in his last discourse, delivered on the anniversary of the establishment of that institution, observed " That the encouragement " extended to the genius of a single living artist in the higher " classes of art, though it may produce but one original work, "" adds more 'o the celebrity of a people, than all the collections " of accumulated foreign productions."

than the last, will not be backward in "stretching forth a hand to sustain the drooping genius of their country; in protecting the pursuits of peace amidst the operations of war; and calling forth her arts to emulation, while conducting her arms to victory."

It will be one endeavour of the *Cabinet* to promote, in a degree however inconsiderable, this interesting and important national object. We shall embrace every opportunity of paying an honourable tribute to the merits of the *English School* of Painting and Sculpture, not omitting however to do justice to the capital works of the *Foreign Masters*, both ancient and modern, of which it is our intention to take an occasional survey. Neither shall the minor art of *Engraving*, so assiduously and successfully cultivated in Britain, pass unnoticed in our pages.

These slight observations will not unsuitably be closed, by a notice of some of the Publications relative to the Fine Arts, which are shortly expected to make their appearance.

The Rev. Edward Forster has announced a British Gallery of Engravings, (upon the plan of the Dusseldorf and other Galleries on the Continent) from Pictures of the Italian, French, Flemish, Dutch and English Schools, now in the possession of the King, and the principal Nobility and Gentry of the United Kingdom; with some account of each picture, and the life of the Artist. And also a short history of the arts of Painting and Engraving, including the rise and progress of those arts in Great Britain.

We understand that a similar work is expected from another quarter, to be superintended by Mr. Tresham.

Mr. Landseer is about to print his course of Lectures, as delivered before the Members of the Royal Institution; and

The works of Hogarth are publishing in numbers, illustrated with biographical anecdotes, a chronological catalogue and commentary. By John Nichols F. S. A. and the late Mr. George Steevens.

Flaxman's designs from Dante are also preparing for publication. This excellent Artist is employed on a great national monument of Lord Howe; a statue of Sir Joshua Reynolds, at the expence (for the honour of the country we regret to say) of his relations; and a statue of Mr. Pitt, for the City of Glasgow. The two former will be erected in St. Paul's Cathedral.

# A FEW WORDS OF ADVICE

## TO THE CONDUCTOR OF THE CABINET.

MR. CONDUCTOR,

I AM a sort of Literary *Lounger*, though no *Connoisseur*, yet an *Idler*, like myself, will always assume a right to turn *Observer* upon every *Adventurer*; and, whether you may subscribe to my opinions or not, yet (as I mean to subscribe to your work) I shall offer them very freely.

Too many publications promise much at their outset, and perform little in the sequel; great expectations will be formed of what may be produced by the members of a British *Cabinet*; and in case of failure, every *Guardian* of his own Rights will become a *Tatler*, you will be accused as a *Rambler* from your engagements, and, at your downfal, the *World* will be an unconcerned *Spectator*; while, on the contrary, by proper polish and reflection, you may be styled the *Mirror* of all *Monthly Magazines* in the metropolis.—So much for your *Title*, I shall next make some remarks as to the general conduct of the work itself.

With regard to the engraved heads prefixed to each number, and called portraits, I would certainly advise that they should bear *some* resemblance to the originals; this, notwithstanding it may be but a trifling recommendation to some readers, will often prove an advantage; for, however singular it may appear, I have frequently purchased a picture myself, for no reason than that it put me in mind of the person it professed to represent.

I am conscious, however, that there may be exceptions to this general rule; indeed I know a very worthy vender of prints, who keeps in his cellar some hundreds of admirals, and generals, ready engraved, and by cutting off the arm of one, or clapping a convenient patch on the eye of another, he is always ready, before any of his competitors, to present the town with striking likenesses of any, or all, of those persons who so frequently claim our attention and gratitude. However, as there is no subject on which people are apt to disagree so pointedly as on the precision or dissimilarity of

a copy from nature, you may safely steer clear of all criticism, and perhaps please all parties, by embellishing your incipient number, with a face combining Cooke's nose, Kemble's chin, and Munden's mouth, with the arch eye of Lewis, and writing under it

"The Head of an Eminent Actor."

Thus every one will recognise the feature of a favourite, and one feature in a whole face, is as much as they ought to expect.

Admit no *Puns* into your Miscellany. Dennis, the Critic, has said, and I know not how many others after him, that a punster is no better than a pickpocket, and with truth, for how dare any quibbling varlet attempt to rob his neighbour of any portion of that delightful inflexibility, the very taciturnity of which bespeaks what *wisdom* may lie *buried* in a *grave* demeanour?

Be not too *sentimental* neither; nor copy the infantine simplicity of those dear little children of the *Della Cruscan School*, who "*lisp in numbers.*"---Do not let them lisp in any number of the Cabinet. No, sir, like Sir Peter Teazle, I say, "curse your sentiments;"---for the man whose effeminate ideas, expressed in effeminate accents, would contribute to lessen the manly character of the English nation, deserves to be lost in a labyrinth---as I am now, and left in the lurch for a finish to each sentence he commences.

On the other hand, you must carefully shun the affectation of *bombastic diction*---it is lamentable to see a pre-elucidated theme rendered semidiaphonous, by the elimination of simple expression, to make room for the conglomeration of ponderous periods, and to exhibit the phonocamptic coxcombry of some pedant, who mistakes sentences for waggons, and words for the wheels of them.

Avoid *alliteration*, allowed by all to be the very vehicle of vicious verbosity, particularly in a periodical publication; therefore, the thought that dully depends, during lengthened lines of lumbering lucubration, on innumerable initials introduced instead of rhyme or reason, is really reprehensible. Shakspeare, scorning the sufferance of such a sneaking style, said "Wit whither wilt?"

Lest you should put the same question to me, I will give you my concluding piece of advice, which is, that you should beware of introducing second-hand *Rural*

*Tales* and Essays, from the successful labours of your predecessors. Such things *have* happened more than once, and I remember reading a letter to the editor, in the first number of a new magazine, which was unfortunately signed by, An Old Subscriber.

P. S. I meant to have called myself a *Constant Reader*, but, if you follow my advice, you will have so many of those, you will not know how to distinguish me from others. I shall, therefore, address my future correspondence, provided you insert this, under the signature of my proper initials,

S. L. U. M.

---

## ACTS OF INSOLVENCY.

METHINKS, these *Acts* which are becoming so frequent, should be called *Acts of solvency*; since they enable men to pay debts, and (which is extraordinary) without money or effects. But to be serious.—Acts of insolvency are occasional acts, by which persons are discharged from suits and imprisonment, upon surrendering their all to their creditors*. It hath often been agitated, to whom the benefit of these acts should extend; whether to all indifferently, or only to some, who could with propriety be deemed proper objects of it? But, though to draw the line, and define boundaries, be generally difficult in human affairs, yet here it seems easy. Let a court or committee of equity be ordained, to sit at stated times upon prisoners for debt: and let all, whom *misfortunes* have brought into durance, be released; but let *defaulters* or rogues be detained, or otherwise disposed of according to some wise police. To think of releasing all, the guilty as well as innocent, would be as unjust and partial, as it would be weak and impolitic; and were any one to propose this, "perhaps to be *popular*," I should deem him knavish as well as foolish. As deliberate schemes, as ever were concerted for a burglary, have been concerted to gain trust and credit, in order to defraud and rob: and getting into debt, with such concerters, is nothing else but a certain mode of robbing.

D.

---

* Blackstone's Commentaries, ii. 31.

# REVIEW OF BOOKS.

## PROBATQUE CULPATQUE.

*The Life of John Milton, By Charles Symmons, D. D. of Jesus College, Oxford. 8vo. Johnson. pp.* 566. *London* 1806.

THE Biographers of Milton have been many; Aubrey, Wood, Philips, and Toland; Dr. Johnson, Hayley, and Todd; have given us the Life of this pride and boast of the English nation. How Dr. Johnson has treated the character and political principles of Milton is known to every body; no two men could entertain more opposite sentiments, on the subject of kings, and government, and popular rights. That Johnson had no veneration for Milton as a man, or as a patriot, there can be no doubt. It is no less true that he has spoken of him with unwarrantable acrimony, and done injustice to his memory by imputing unworthy motives to some parts of his public conduct; but, while we lament that Dr. Johnson's political prejudices should so far have misled him, we can by no means join in the *Hue and Cry* which has been raised against the Doctor since his death, first by Mr. Hayley, and now by Dr. Symmons, who, however laudable their intentions, and successful their efforts, as far as regards the character of Milton, certainly pass all limits of truth and reason in their abuse of the great biographer.

Johnson was a *Tory*, Dr. Symmons

"Glories as he professes himself to be a WHIG, to be of the school of SOMMERS and of LOCKE, to arrange himself in the same political class with those enlightened and virtuous statesmen, who framed the BILL OF RIGHTS, and the ACT OF SETTLEMENT, and who, presenting a crown which they had wrested from a pernicious bigot and his family, to the HOUSE OF HANOVER, gave that most honourable and legitimate of titles, the FREE CHOICE OF THE PEOPLE, to the Sovereign who now wields the Imperial sceptre of Britain."

Those who follow Milton through the troubles of England in which he bore a part, will think well or ill of his conduct, according as they have formed their opinion of the two parties at that time struggling for predominance; he will be considered by some, as the instiga-

tor and advocate of rebellion; by others, as the honest, uniform, and undaunted champion of the liberties of his country. Hence the different hue and aspect under which Milton is exhibited to us by Dr. Johnson and Dr. Symmons.

The life of the poet by Dr. Johnson, is stigmatised by Dr. S. as "an atrocious libel." If Dr. Johnson were alive, he would probably consider the present performance as a *hyperbolical panegyric*.

Dr. Symmons' production is designed to accompany the edition of Milton's prose works. It is written with remarkable elegance and vigour, and we have no hesitation in declaring, that it is the fullest, the best arranged, and the most eloquent life of Milton which has yet been given to the world. It would be tedious, and 'from the purpose,' to attend the biographer through all the different stages of the poet's life; we shall advert chiefly to those points which have excited controversy, and which, we think will prove the most interesting to those who are already pretty well acquainted with the particulars of the immortal Bard's history.

Dr. Symmons examines the several authorities upon which the report of his suffering corporal punishment at the university is supposed to rest, and seems to think Dr. Johnson guilty of disengenuousness in the conclusion he draws from the words *et cætera*, in the verses to Diodatus, "What was more than threat was evidently punishment." We should be glad to get entirely rid of this story of the birch, which, even allowing it to be true, would reflect no disgrace upon Milton, unless it could be proved that he merited the castigation. We think it is now quite settled that he neither deserved nor sustained any such indignity. Dr. S. also very ably defends the *Epitaphium Damonis* from Johnson's censure of its being 'written with the common, but childish imitation of pastoral life.' Of this elegy he gives the original, and a translation. The latter is correct and elegant, but somewhat cold. We think Dr. S. will not be displeased if we refer him to an animated version of it by the late unfortunate Dermody, inserted in his life by Mr. Raymond.

The charge against Milton, of interpolating the *Ikon Basilike* with a prayer from Sydney's *Arcadia*, is likewise satisfactorily repelled; and, Dr. Johnson, "that libeller of Milton!" as he is called, comes in for a smart

trimming, for his ready belief of the story. Mr. Warton, too, who seems to Dr. S. to be " an author who has accidentally and capriciously been elevated into unmerited celebrity," is called to severe account, for attributing an abhorrence of plays to a poet, " who, not only wrote *Samson Agonistes*, but who has left behind him a variety of subjects for the drama" This mistake of Warton and others, had been already corrected by Mr. Waldron, in his Republication of Downes' *Roscius Anglicanus*. The force of Hume's arguments in support of the opinion, that the *Ikon* was written by Charles, is also called in question; the historian is accused of exhibiting, " the most delicate and tremulous reserve, with the most determined preference; the most specious affectation of candour, with the most injurious violation and contempt of it." Johnson, Warton, and Hume, have never been suspected of inclining to the cause of the republicans at this crisis, and they all feel, in turns, the weight of Dr. Symmons' resentment. We agree with Hume, that the testimonies to prove that the *Ikon* is the production of the king, and those which assign it to Dr. Gauden, are both of great strength. Dr. Symmons decides for Gauden; and, it is curious to remark, the different language of writers who labour to establish opposite positions.

" These meditations," says Hume, " resemble in elegance, purity, neatness, and simplicity, the genius of those performances which we know, with certainty, to have flowed from the royal pen; but are so unlike the bombast, perplexed, rhetorical, and corrupt style, of Dr. Gauden, to whom they are ascribed, that no human testimony seems sufficient to convince us that he was the author."

But now *audi alteram partem*; Dr Symmons affirms, that,

" The composition of this little volume, is radically different from that of the writings which unquestionably came from the pen of Charles; that its pages are sometimes strewn with false flowers, and the glitter of fanciful conceits; that its stile is antithetically and artificially constructed, and that it is infinitely more like to that of a doctor, than to that of a king."

Between such authorities who shall decide? The specimens quoted by Mr. Laing, " that acute and able historian," from the *Ikon*, and from one of Charles's known compositions, are certainly very different in point of style; but such evidence must always be inconclusive: and, notwithstanding the suspicions of Milton;

the memorandum of Lord Anglesey of the disavowal of the *Ikon*, as a work of their father's, by Charles II. and the Duke of York; Dr. Walker's account; Mrs. Gauden's narrative; and the other corroborating circumstances stated by Dr. Symmons; we do not think the question is yet so settled as our Biographer thinks he has left it. The evidence however undoubtedly preponderates on the side of Gauden.

Whether the world has benefited or lost by Milton's temporary desertion of the Muses in favour of polemical writing, is a question that every one will answer according to his individual feeling. The poet, the man of genius, and the lover of literature, will lament that the author of PARADISE LOST should ever have quitted the flowery walks of Poesy, for the perplexed and thorny labyrinth of Politics:---he who, as Dr. Johnson observes, "had the power of displaying the vast, illuminating the splendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful;" whose "delight was to sport in the wide regions of possibility, who sent his faculties out upon discovery into worlds where only imagination can travel, and delighted to form new modes of existence, and furnish sentiment and action to superior beings, to trace the counsels of hell, or accompany the choirs of heaven." Dr. Symmons hesitates a little upon this point, but he evidently inclines more towards the poet than the politician.

> "By the appropriation of his powers to controversy, during the high noon of his manhood, we have lost, as we may be certain, many a rich effusion of fancy, on which we might have dwelt with exquisite delight: but we have gained by it the spectacle of a magnificent mind in a new course of action, throwing its soaring fullness over a strange country, and surprising us with the force and the flexibility of the human intellect."

The motives for Milton's political conduct and writings, were no doubt pure and honourable, and he must be a zealot indeed, who will not allow him to have maintained, amid all the changes and distractions of his time, the most upright and disinterested character---that he did not see through the hypocritical designs of Cromwell, may indeed be some impeachment of his sagacity: his panegyric of the Protector, is very lofty; but, while he applauds the "patriæ liberator, libertatis auctor, custosque idem et conservator," he cautions him against the abuse of the power with which

he had been invested, in terms that sufficiently manifest the virtuous independence of his mind.

We should trespass too far on the limits we propose for this department of the *Cabinet*, were we to obey the impulse of our wishes, by entering into a minute analysis of this most excellent Life, which, in opposition to the denomination Dr. S. has given to Dr. Johnson's performance, that of "a biographical libel," we shall call a *noble biographical eulogy*. Each has verged a little towards the extreme; the middle way still remains to be trodden. We must not omit, however, to direct the reader to the character of Laud, and the pernicious tendency of his conduct as a politician and churchman (p. 173). Dr. Symmons, review of the measures of this unfortunate prelate, calls forth a manly and dignified expression of his own sentiments of the Church of England. The character of Charles is thus concisely given.

"If he has been lowered beneath his just level by his enemies, he has been proportionably raised above it by his friends, and, with a nice regard to truth, we may probably place him in the central point between Nero, to whom he has been resembled by the former, and either of the Antonines, above whom he has been advanced, not without a degree of profane temerity, to the honours of sainthood and martyrdom by the latter. His private life was not, perhaps, liable to censure, as it was blemished only with common imperfection; but his public conduct betrayed the violence of a despot, with the duplicity and equivocating morality of a follower of Loyola."

Bradshaw, the president of the tribunal which adjudged Charles to the block, is considered by Dr. S.

"As a man who was mistaken indeed, and placed in an unfortunate situation, but whose radical and vital principle was public virtue; who would have been honoured in the purest times of Grecian and Roman patriotism, and whose high-souled and consistent independence refused, on more than one occasion, to submit to the will of an imperious and irresistible usurper."

The fidelity of these portraits many will question, nor do we conceive that Charles II. worthless and profligate as he was, merits the charge of cruelty and malignity in the degree imputed to him by Dr. S.

A full account is given of the controversy with Salmasius, who is supposed, not without strong grounds, to have furnished Mr. Burke with some of the language and doctrines which we find in his works respecting the French Revolution.

Dr. S. winds up his volume with a summary of Milton's character. The picture he has drawn of him shews the hand of a master; the outline is bold, the colouring vivid, and the expression forcible; the likeness too is strong, but flattering: the rugged features are all softened down, and the whole is more like the description which a lover would give of his mistress, than a faithful portraiture drawn after the life.

We have already said that this is the best Life of Milton. The matter and the manner of it (with the slight drawbacks we have noticed) are entitled to the highest approbation. From the prose works many just inferences are drawn, and much new light thrown upon Milton's views and motives, as well as upon the characters of others who distinguished themselves on the side of the republicans. The stile is uniformly animated; it may be thought at times to be too florid, and to rise above the sober tone of a biographical work; but who in writing a life of Milton, especially one who, like Dr. S. has felt the inspiration of the Muse, could restrain himself within the ordinary limits of prose composition? We shall quote a few specimens:

"Amid the ruins of Britain, Milton will survive: Europe will preserve one portion of him; and his native strains will be cherished in the expanding bosom of the great queen of the Atlantic, when his own London may present the spectacle of Thebes, and his Thames roll a silent and solitary stream through heaps of blended desolation."

"If his course was rapid and brilliant, (speaking of his short stay in Italy) it was not useless to others or to himself. He was a meteor, which gathering all the luminous particles within the sphere of its attraction, absorbed, and blended them with its own radiant body, for the sole purpose of diffusing a stronger emanation of light."

"At the time of which we are speaking (the end of 1653, and the beginning of 1654) the mighty work, [the Paradise Lost] according to Philips, was seriously undertaken; and it is curious to reflect on the steadiness of its growth, under a complication of adverse circumstances; and to see it, like a pine on the rocks of Norway, ascending to its majestic elevation, beneath the inclemency of a dreary sky, and assailed in the same moment, by the fury of the ocean at its feet, and the power of the tempest above its head."

Many such passages as these will be found in the volume. Dr. S. no doubt thought that he had a right, considering his subject, to introduce the *gigantesca sublimita Miltoniana*.

As a critic, he has shewn infinite taste and sagacity. His criticism on the irregular Latin Ode in the volume of Milton's Poems sent to the Bodleian Library, is deeply learned, and curiously minute. The single remark of Mr. Warton, which points out a false quantity in the use of the word *solers*, (and whose observations on Milton's latin prose composition, are stated by Dr. S. to "discover the Critic to be qualified only by presumption for the office") induced Dr. S. to offer a more extensive piece of criticism, on that wild and lawless composition.

The comparison between Milton and Shakspeare, as to their creative power, particularly with respect to Comus, The Tempest, &c. is a masterly specimen of discrimination.

The translations, both of the prose and poetical pieces, are several of them, from the pen of the Rev. Francis Wrangham. They are faithful, elegant, and spirited.

Before, however, we close our Review, we must again observe, that Dr. Johnson has been treated with an asperity, scarcely to be justified even between living literary combatants. We do not hold with the maxim "de mortuis, nil nisi bonum" but certainly "nil nisi *verum*."

It is more than inferred, and almost directly charged, that Dr. Johnson was a participator with Lauder, in the nefarious attack upon Milton. He is called his "*literary accomplice*," his "*great literary patron*;" and in another place, he is declared to be, "an accomplice in the malignity; *if candour* obliges us to admit his ignorance of the frauds of its author;" again "Dr. Johnson survived the disgrace of his infamous alliance, to enjoy the opportunity of attempting with much deeper, though not more effectual wounds, the impassible reputation of Milton," and, Dr. Symmons might have proceeded to add, of publishing a review on the *Paradise Lost*, which contains more solid criticism, with clearer and more forcible illustration, and conveys more just and pointed encomium, than all the comments and panegyrics which have ever, either before or since, proceeded from his most enthusiastic admirers.

No man had a greater reverence for truth than Dr. Johnson: and even admitting that he *wished well* to the success of Lauder's undertaking, we trust there are very few persons who will listen without indignation to the suggestion that he had any knowledge of the fraud that had been committed. On the contrary, "ought not candour

to oblige us to admit," that, crediting Lauder's pretended discovery, the encouragement he afforded that unfortunate man arose from his *detestation* of fraud, which he believed at the time to have been justly attributable to Milton as an unacknowledging plagiarist?

With equal indignation we read the assertion that when Johnson stated "that it happens to be known that his (Milton's) daughters were never taught to write," he *must have known* what Aubrey had told, viz. that Milton's youngest daughter was his amanuensis. "Though truth," continues Dr. S. illiberally, and we sincerely believe unwarrantably, "though truth was dear to him, the depreciation of Milton was still dearer." What is this but saying that Dr. Johnson would have told a deliberate falsehood, if thereby he could have injured the character of Milton? "Truth, religious, moral, and political, is what alone I profess to pursue." So says Dr. Symmons in his preface; we hope that after this truly excellent scholar, able critic, and liberal advocate of civil and religious liberty, shall have quitted the scene of life, his veneration for that paramount quality, will never be called in question with so little reason as he has endeavoured to fix a departure from it on the illustrious English moralist.

With an allusion, however, to Dr. Johnson's Life of Milton he began, and with Johnson he must end. He dispatches him with the following *coup de grace*. "The delinquency of the libellous biographer, is ill compensated by the merit of the monotonous and heavy-gaited morality of the sombre and dogmatic essayist."

May we have many such delinquent biographers, and many such sombre and dogmatic essayists!

*Geographical Delineations: or, a Compendious View of the Natural and Political State of all Parts of the Globe. By J. Aiken, M. D.* 12*mo.* 2 *vol. Johnson.* 1806.

The utility of a publication like this, need scarcely to be insisted upon, and to say that Dr. Aiken is the author, implies that the manner in which the undertaking is executed, is proportionate to its importance. These *Delineations* are designed as an intermediate work, between the common elementary books on geography, and the more complete systems of that branch of knowledge; and the object intended by the performance is, to afford in a moderate compass, and under an agreeable form, such a view of every thing most important, relative to the natural, and political state of the world

which we inhabit, as may dwell upon the mind in vivid colours, and durably impress it with just and instructive notions. In his view of each country, the author has considered what nature has made it, and what man has made it. This arrangement is very judicious, and Dr. Aiken has introduced under both divisions, and in a reduced form, every thing that is interesting and valuable.

The boundaries of the different countries are minutely traced, and Dr. A. has made it his particular business to shew how far the great portions or masses, into which nature seems to have divided the land upon this globe, coincide with the territorial distributions made by human policy; and those grand features of country, mountains and rivers, have likewise been laid down, with a degree of precision correspondent to their geographical importance. It is presumed by the writer, that a good map will be in possession of his readers, for, as he very justly observes, the size and price of his work would not have admitted of such an accompaniment, except on so small a scale as to be of little service.

A publication of this kind must necessarily be compiled. But there are some compilations which cost more labour, and are infinitely more useful, than a work entirely original. This is one of them. The authorities consulted are very numerous, and Dr. A. has shewn equal judgment and impartiality in his selections.

Such, in brief, is the character of these volumes, which we cordially recommend, in the words of the author, 'to young persons of both sexes, at the period of finishing their education, as a summary of what is important to be remembered, relative to the topics treated of, and as affording compendious information, and matter for reflection to those of maturer years, who are destitute of time and opportunity for copious research.'

*The Birds of Scotland; with other Poems; by James Grahame*, 12mo. *pp.* 248, *Edinburgh, Blackwood. London, Longman*, 1806.

Mr. Grahame has already recommended himself to the public, by a pleasing poem on the *Sabbath*, which soon ran through several editions, and led us to form a very favourable opinion of him as a man of worth and piety, and a poet of more than ordinary capacity. We, therefore, took up the present volume with an expectation of deriving much gratification from a perusal of its contents, and we are happy to say that our expectation has not been disappointed.

In the first and most important of these poems, the author has endeavoured to delineate the *manners and characters of Birds*, and the scenes which they frequent in his own country.

> "The woodland song, the various vocal quires,
> That harmonize fair Scotia's streamy vales;
> Their habitations, and their little joys;
> The winged dwellers on the leas, and moors,
> And mountain cliffs; the woods, the streams, themselves,
> the sweetly rural, and the savage scene,—
> Haunts of the plumy tribes,—be these my theme!"

The "plumy tribes" have been celebrated incidentally by several of our descriptive bards, but we believe they now, for the first time, form the subject of a poem exclusively. In the natural history of birds, there is every thing to amuse the mind, to gratify curiosity, and excite our wonder and admiration; and we are glad that they have found at last a poet so competent to undertake the grateful task of recording their praises and ingenuity, from the domestic robin who ventures to pick the crumbs from the hand, to the lordly eagle,

> "Who far above the fire-impregnate wreaths
> Soaring surveys the ethereal volcanos."

The minute characteristic descriptions, however, which such a subject almost incessantly requires, are often clogs upon the poet, which, with all his skill in versification, and efforts at variety, he cannot sufficiently throw off; and they sometimes induce a *tædium* from which the reader is frequently anxious to obtain relief.

This difficulty, however, is, upon the whole, tolerably well surmounted, and we meet with many passages in which originality of thought, and accuracy of description, are combined with very beautiful imagery, and the true grandeur of poetical expression.

In part the third, which includes the birds of prey, the falcon, cormorant, eagle, &c. Mr. Grahame rises with his subject, and almost attains sublimity. His description of these birds, and of the bold northern scenery which they haunt, is animated in the highest degree.

The apostrophe to "the full-streamed Clyde," is extremely beautiful; as also is the ascent and descent of the eagle; the falcon's eyry, and the cormorant's voracious range

> "Along the blood-stained Coast of Senegal."

The description of *The Eagle of the Sea* not being too long, we shall transcribe it.

" Of bulk more huge, and borne on broader vans,
The EAGLE OF THE SEA from Atlas soars,
Or Teneriffe's hoar peak, and stretches far
Above the Atlantic wave, contemning distance.
The watchful helmsman from the stern descries,
And hails her course, and many an eye is rais'd.
Loftier she flies than hundred times mast-height:
Onward she floats, then plunges from her soar
Down to the ship, as if she aimed to perch
Upon the main-mast pinnacle: but up again
She mounts Alp high, and with her lowered head
Suspended, eyes the bulging sails, disdains
Their tardy course, hurrying outflies the rack,
And, disappearing, mingles with the clouds."

The poem is almost free from *Scotticisms*. Many Scotch words, indeed, are introduced, and many old English words which appear like Scotch, but of these there is a glossary, and Mr. Grahame has used them only where a modern English synonime equally emphatic, did not present itself. We observed, however, one or two modes of expression, which to us " on the South side of the Tweed," appear rather harsh, " O, I *would* never tire," (p. 11.) " To limn, *of new*, thy half-forgotten name." (p. 25.)

In some of the lines the measure is imperfect.

" And spread around: Lost in the midst." (p. 13.)
" Significant: comprizing all." (p. 58.)

We think also that the versification in general appears stiff and affected, from too studied an imitation of Milton's pauses, by constantly running the lines into one another, and often concluding the sense with the second syllable.

" Meantime her young, among the brush-roots, lurk
Secure." (p. 17.)

The instances of this are very numerous. The licences in which Milton indulged, and for which he was satisfied with his own authority, are far from being beauties in a poem of moderate compass. We noticed another singularity, of which we cannot approve---as in these lines,

" There no martin builds
Her airy nest; not even the owl alights
On *these unhallow'd walls:* the murderer's head
Was shelter'd *by these walls:* hands blood-imbrued
Founded *these walls*,—Mackenzie's purpled hands. (p. 25.)

In the following lines the repetition is still more

offensive. The poet is alluding to the cotton-mills in which young children are constantly employed.

> "They see the light, 'tis true—they see and know
> That light for them is but an implement
> Of *toil*. In summer with the sun they rise
> To *toil*, and with his setting beam they cease
> To *toil*; nor does the shorten'd winter day
> Their *toil* abridge; for 'ere the cock's first crow,
> Aroused to *toil*, they lift their heavy eyes,
> And force their childish limbs to rise and *toil*. (p. 45.)

If this reiteration of the word *toil* be meant to convey an idea of ceaseless and unwearing labour, it will not be considered as a very happy accommodation of sound to sense; and it would be much easier to find a poet who could toil through hundreds of such lines, than a reader who would follow him.

The above lines are moreover prosaic, and of such lines there are not a few. The following, wherein Mr. G. justly observes upon the bad effects of this *system of toil*, are *verse only to the eye*.

> "Here vice collected festers, and corrupts.
> The female virtues fade; and in their stead,
> Springs up a produce rank of noxious weeds.
> And if such be the effects of that sad system
> Which in the face of Nature's law would wring
> Gain from the labouring hands of playful children;
> If such the effects where worth and sense direct
> The living, intellectual machines,
> What must not follow when the power is lodged
> With senseless, sordid, heartless avarice?" (p. 46.)

Place the seven last lines in the order of prose, and nobody would suppose that they ever could belong to a Poem.

These, however, are but slight exceptions from the general excellence of the poem; we point them out, because we fear Mr. Grahame looks upon them as recommendations rather than defects, and in order that young writers may not be misled to imitate an example which we think a bad one. The innocent and ingenious employments of the feathered race; their wonderful instincts; the amusement and delight they afford to man: are all illustrated in the most pleasing manner. The descriptions are recommended by simplicity and pathos, and while the poet expatiates on the works of nature, he does not forget the most important part of a poet's duty, to "point from nature up to nature's God."

The digressions are few and easy, and at the same time that they embellish the poem, they relieve our attention from the principal objects, and strongly interest the

best feelings of our nature. Of this kind, among others, are the little narrative of the impressed Sea-boy, (p. 6.) the Child Robbery, (p. 37.) where Mr. Grahame has borrowed the mother's sensations from the *Lady Randolph* of his countryman, Home.

> " Nor does even time---
> Assuager of all other woes—bring balm
> To this: each child, to boyish years grown up,
> Reminds you of *your* boy! He might have been
> Like this, fair, blooming, modest, looking down
> With most engaging bashfulness."

The feelings of a mother on the loss or absence of a beloved son, is a subject to which the author seems to take a mournful delight in recurring. He has adverted to them in no less than three little episodes in the course of this short work. The following interesting picture of maternal anxiety must not be omitted. After relating the fate of a poor youth who fell in battle, and whose body is left to the birds of prey on the Banks of the Danube, the author thus proceeds:

> " Ah, one there is
> Who fosters long the dying hope, that still
> He may return: the live-long summer day
> She at her house-end sits; and oft her wheel
> Is stopt, while on the road, far stretch'd, she bends
> A melancholy, eye-o'erflowing look;
> Or strives to mould the distant traveller
> Into the form of him who's far away.
> Hopeless, and broken-hearted, still she loves
> To sing, *When wild war's dismal blast was blawn*."

The animated allusion to the African Slave Trade, of which we now begin to entertain a well-founded hope of the abolition, we should take a pleasure in quoting, had we not already occupied more room than we can well afford. The extent however to which we have carried our remarks, will testify our sense of the merit of the *Birds of Scotland*.

The other poems consist of *Biblical pictures*, which are short and animated representations, in blank verse, of some of the interesting events recorded in scripture. These are followed by a poetical view of the several months in the year, under the title of the *Rural Calendar*. They are, as Mr. Grahame modestly denominates them, *faithful sketches*, and as well as the remaining pieces, are highly honourable both to the talents and sensibility of their author.

The notes possess considerable interest. With respect to the laying out of grounds, &c. Mr. G. much to the credit of his taste, is an *Anti-Brownist*. In the Birds of Scotland he pointedly censures the *levelling-system*, and supports his opinion by several extracts from Mr. Uvedale Price's *Essay on the picturesque*.

*Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, Governor of Nottingham Castle and Town, Representative of the County of Nottingham in the Long Parliament, and of the Town of Nottingham in the first Parliament of Charles II. &c. with original Anecdotes of many of the most distinguished of his Contemporaries, and a Summary Review of Public Affairs: written by his Widow Lucy, Daughter of Sir Allen Apsley, Lieutenant of the Tower, &c. now first published from the original Manuscript. By the Rev. Julius Hutchinson, &c. &c. To which is prefixed the Life of Mrs. Hutchinson, written by herself, a Fragment. royal 4to. pp. 446. Longman and Co. 1806.*

These Memoirs contain an abundance of information and amusement, and, as their genuineness are undoubted, and the talents and experience of the writer considerable, the historian may collect many new facts, relative to the times in which she lived, and some fresh *data*, which may serve to clear up such points as have been mistaken, or left in doubt by preceding writers. Colonel Hutchinson was one of those who signed the death-warrant of King Charles I. Among a variety of other curious matter, some additional circumstances are related, respecting the motives and proceedings of the party attached to Cromwell; the return of Charles II.; the trial of the Regicides; and the hopes and fears of those who were concerned in bringing his father to the block.

It does not fall within our plan to enter fully into the merits of a work of this kind. It is to be recommended, however, as a very useful publication, containing as it does, "a history of a period the most remarkable in the British annals, written one hundred and fifty years ago, by a lady of elevated birth, of a most comprehensive and highly cultivated mind, herself a witness of many of the scenes she describes, and active in several of them."

Mrs. Hutchinson seems, indeed to have been a very extraordinary character, and her name deserves to stand high on the list of illustrious females. The volume is ornamented with portraits of herself and the Colonel, very finely engraved by Neagle and Freeman.

*Authentic Narrative of the Death of Lord Nelson: with the circumstances preceding, attending, and subsequent to that event; the professional report on his Lordship's wound; and several interesting Anecdotes. By William Beatty, M. D. Surgeon to the Victory in the Battle of Trafalgar, and now Physician to the Fleet under the command of the Earl of St. Vincent, K. B. &c. &c. &c. large 8vo. 7s. Cadell and Davies,* 1807.

So many contradictory and unfounded rumours had got abroad respecting the nature of Lord Nelson's wound; its situation; the quarter from whence the fatal shot proceeded; his sufferings, observations, and last moments; that Dr. Beatty has felt it incumbent on him, as the professional gentleman who attended his Lordship on this mournful occasion, to give an authentic statement of all the circumstances. In doing this he has paid a respectful tribute to the memory of the immortal hero of the Nile, and rendered a very acceptable service to the public, who will not read without strong emotion the affecting particulars which are here recorded with equal simplicity and feeling. The account includes the most interesting incidents which occurred on board the Victory from the time of her sailing from England, in the month of September, till the day of battle inclusively; and also a detail of the mode adopted for preserving his revered remains during the subsequent long passage of the Victory to England; and the condition of the body when it was deposited in Greenwich Hospital. Some observations are likewise made on the state of his Lordship's health for some time previous to his fall; with his habits of life, and other circumstances, strongly proving that few men had a greater prospect, in the common course of events, of attaining longevity.

To quote what is interesting in this narrative, would be to transcribe the volume. Admiration and grief alternately fill the mind of the reader as he traces the progress of the battle on which the fate of our country probably depended, and the bodily agonies, noble fortitude, and pious resignation of the conqueror, as the hour of death approached.

This Narrative will be republished in the Life of Lord Nelson, by the Rev. J. S. Clarke, and Mr. M'Arthur, for which it was originally intended. Dr. Beatty has shewn a proper consideration for the public in printing it in this separate form; since the magnificent biography in preparation, will probably not make its

appearance for several months. The portrait prefixed is one of the best likenesses we have seen of Lord Nelson. There is also a plate representing the ball in the exact state in which it was extracted; and in its present state, as enclosed by Dr. Beatty in a glass case.

*A Vindication of Mrs. Lee's Conduct towards the Gordons; written by herself. Greenland and Norris.* 4*to.* 3*s.* 1807.

This mysterious transaction cannot yet be forgotten. The conduct of the Gordons is to be regarded with abhorrence; but Mrs. Lee's account of the affair is far from satisfactory. Notwithstanding this vindication, her behaviour seems to have been so ambiguous and extraordinary, that we cannot acquit her of imprudence, and even of folly; and there is still a mystery in the whole business, which, like the History of Betty Canning, Mrs. Margaret Rudd, and Miss Blandy, may hereafter furnish ample room for conjecture to those who shall think such investigations of importance.

Our motive for noticing this pamphlet at all is, to caution females against indulging wild and speculative opinions on the subject of religion, and entertaining the absurd notion, that to deviate from established principles, and the prescribed regulations for human conduct, is an evidence of an original and penetrating character. An eccentricity bordering on insanity, seems to have marked the whole course of Mrs. Lee's history, as she has herself *set it down*; and, considering the injuries and insults she affects to have received, and recollecting what is supposed to have passed at Tetsworth, we know not whether to smile, or be angry at the consolatory deduction which she draws from a review of the singular incidents in which she has been engaged.

"They (the public) have been a little amused; I have been much instructed, *having seen the human character in a new point of view*!"

*Poetical Amusement on the Journey of Life, consisting of various Pieces in Verse; serious, theatric, epigrammatic and miscellaneous. By William Meyler,* 8*vo.* 6*s. Robinson, London,* 1806.

THIS volume really affords what it promises, much "*Poetical Amusement.*" We have frequently been pleased with Mr. Meyler's compositions, as they have met our view in the daily prints; we are therefore glad to find them collected into a volume. Some of the pieces are

excellent, and all above mediocrity. As a *taste of his quality*, we subjoin the *Invocation to Sleep*, from the Latin.

Emblem of death! come soothing, balmy sleep,
Friend of my pillow! o'er my eye-lids creep;
Soft let me slumber, gently breathing, sigh,
Live without life, and without dying---die!

———*Sic sine vita*
*Vivere quam suave est, sic sine morte mori!*

*The Elements of Greek Grammar, with Notes for the use of those who have made some progress in the Language.* 8vo. *pp* 200. *Pridden.*

A Grammarian was 'i' th' olden time,' what we now understand by the word Critic, and his functions were the same. At present, however, the distinction no longer maintains that high ground on which it once stood; and even *grammar* itself, amongst many authors of our day, miscalled men of *letters*, is held in no estimation. Voluminous writers, well known to the devouring appetites of modern readers, have most *ingenuously* made their opinions public on this subject. The Rev. Mr. Noble, F. A. S. who writes memoirs and topography by the hundred weight, has a sovereign contempt for the acquisition of grammar, and prefers one fact, however unimportant, to all that Wallis or Lowth ever wrote or knew about it. Mr. D'Israeli, another *independent* author, who has compiled anecdotes, described (how, no one knows) what a *literary* character should be, and scribbled poetry and romances by the cart load, has often, in as many words, most freely confessed and proved his sentiment to have always been, that grammar is a study beneath the dignified parts of a man of genius! It has been said, however, that 'grammar is the door or gate of the arts and sciences.' Now, as these gentlemen, and numbers like them, have assuredly the *art* of book-making, it is fair to conclude that they have, by means of the ladder of *genius*, got in at the window. This is the genius of the Egyptians, who made bricks without straw. To be serious. Grammar, says Quintilian, is that to eloquence, which the foundation is to the building; they who despise it, as only dealing in low, trivial things, are exceedingly mistaken; it has really more solidity than shew. And Scaliger owned that it was his desire to be a *good grammarian*. '*Sufficit enim ei*, said he, *qui omnes auctores probe vult intelligere, esse grammaticum.*' But he wished to be a grammarian to understand authors who

wrote according to the rules of grammar, and were masters of the philosophy of it. We are frequently with our writers in no such condition; for where is the necessity of grammar to comprehend that which is written without? Most necessary is it, however, to make us capable of entering thoroughly into the meaning of the noble works of ancient Greece and Rome. He, therefore, who furnishes us with arms qualified most readily to achieve this purpose, is worthy of the highest distinction. In this situation stands the learned and ingenious Dr. Valpy, whose *Latin Grammar* has deserved so well of the rising generation, and whose present Greek Grammar on a similar plan, will be found a luminous torch to the remains of Grecian poetry, wit, and eloquence.

This elementary work has the advantage of experience to prove its utility. Among his own pupils, it has been tried, and "the event of that trial has exceeded his most sanguine expectations." *Advert.*

Grammar cannot be too much simplified, and such has been Dr. Valpy's principal object with regard to the rules to be committed to memory, while the notes for the maturer student, are minute and comprehensive. With respect to the greek declensions, "*Grammatici* certant." Vossius and others reduced the number to three, which has been sanctioned by Messieurs de Port Royal. Busby, in his metrical grammar, prefers five declensions, but in doing this, he had in view the assimilation of the Greek and Latin languages. Dr. Valpy judiciously adopts the simplest mode, and thinks, with Sharpe, that the formation of such nouns as are called patronymic, diminutive, amplifying, possessive, and verbal, is better acquired by use, than by a multitude of rules.

The plan of the conjugations is excellent, for the facility it gives to their acquisition; but we do not approve of the omission of a synopsis to the contracted forms of verbs. This is surely no simplification. To have followed the ingenious system of Hermannus in the irregular verbs might have produced brevity, but "*brevis esse*, &c." and under Dr. V.'s peculiar circumstances, it was wisely avoided. The meaning and construction of prepositions are well elucidated, and Huntingford's Exercises recommended by a very honest and just eulogium. In the Syntax, though his pro-

phane authorities are of the greatest purity, we should have preferred examples from the New Testament. The best works on prosody, rhythm, dialects, and accents, are prudently enumerated.

"The great object of the author has been, "says he," utility. He has endeavoured to explain the meaning of terms, and the causes of constructions, and to enliven the rules by anological allusions to other languages; a mode of comparison best calculated to illustrate and familiarize the subject." *Advert.*

Many of his remarks in the notes are new, and he courts even "the severity of censure," to improve a second edition. To cavil at what he has occasionally stated, or to differ from him with an appearance of reason, would be no hard task. It is well known indeed that nothing is easier in most things than to find fault, but especially in regard to classical criticism, in which we all are frequently obliged to guess, and every one most admires his own conjecture. He, however, who can offer to the learned grammarian, arguments sufficiently potent to shew the practicability of *materially* improving this grammar, according to its present dimensions and object, is one whose assistance Dr. Valpy may desire, but cannot easily expect.

---

## REVIEW OF MUSIC.

THE list of literary periodical critics is a numerous one, that of musical critics is, we believe, very confined: willingly, therefore, we devote a few pages of our miscellany to a subject so pleasing and so popular. As music is divided into so many different styles, each of which has its warm and exclusive admirers, it may be asked, under the banners of which of these contending, though not discordant, leaders we propose to enlist ourselves. We answer, that every kind and style of music, whether solemn or airy, whether learned or popular, if it shall be found in our opinion to possess real and intrinsic excellence, will command our approbation and ensure our praise. We are admirers of every good school, and we hope bigots to none. Acknowledging with alacrity, and contemplating with admiration, the wonderful powers and the majestic genius of Handel, we profess ourselves

his warmest admirers; we regard him as the first of musicians; we joyfully award him the right of undisputed sovereignty in the empire of harmony: but while, we pay this willing tribute to his exalted merit, we are equally ready to bestow a portion of our praise, and by no means an inconsiderable one, upon those great masters of song who preceded, who flourished with, and who followed him. We can turn with delight from the learned and sublime compositions of Purcell, of Gibbons or of Croft, to the more light and elegant productions of Haydn, Pleyel, or Mozart: the works of our more modern English composers, equally with those of the present Italian school, will excite our admiration and applause. True genius is confined to no climate, is limited to no country; wherever we find it, we shall hail it with pleasure, and notice it with approbation. It shall be our constant care, and our unremitted endeavour to maintain the credit, and improve the style of the true and legitimate English school of music, a style which, equally removed from the quaint intricacies and subtleties of harmony, and the flimsy and meretricious appendages of false taste, has always boasted the most powerful supporters. In short, it is our duty, and shall be our pride to prove ourselves the steady supporters of genuine merit, and the constant friends of true genius. These remarks premised, we enter on the discharge of our duty.

"*Secure by George's care.*"

*A Glee for four Voices. Composed by John Stafford Smith.*

It is singular enough that neither the Germans nor the Italians, have any species of composition precisely answering to our Glee. They have their Motetts, and their Trios and Quartetts; but the Glee is of genuine English origin. This is the more surprizing, since, perhaps, of the various kinds of music, there is none which affords more pleasure, either to the singer or to the hearer, than a good Glee. The performance of it is not confined to the concert room, nor the enjoyment of it to the scientific hearer; it enlivens the festive board, and adds a zest to the pleasures of the table. The number of Glee writers has been very considerable, and the number of good ones by no means small. The names of Webbe, Cooke, Danby, Paxton, and many others, are familiar to all lovers of harmony, and among them that of John Stafford Smith, deserves to hold a high rank. The melodies of his Glees are pleasing, and his inner parts well arranged. His compositions display much originality of thought, and correctness of execution; and he has been careful not to write himself down by publishing every trifling production of his pen. The number of his Glees is indeed comparatively small, but every one of them possesses

sterling merit. That now before us is worthy of its author; the melody is well adapted, and the parts carefully arranged: the modulation is bold, and the different movements relieve each other with great effect. We have no doubt of its becoming a popular and standard Glee. We are sorry to see Mr. Smith give into the fashion of writing his Alto and Tenor parts in the G clef.

"*O row thee in my Highland Plaid*"

*A favourite Scottish Ballad, written by Mr. Robert Tannahil, and set to Music, with an Accompaniment for the Piano Forte, by Mr. Ross of Aberdeen.*

It is the fate of most imitators of what is excellent, to catch the peculiarities, rather than the beauties of their original. Thus most of those writers who have attempted to compose what they call Scottish Ballads, suppose that they have completely caught the character and manner of the genuine Scottish style, when they have in fact generally contented themselves with now and then interspersing a few of the obvious peculiarities of it, in different parts of their melody. The composition by this means assumes a heterogeneous appearance, it becomes a mixture of two different styles, and cannot properly be classed with either; precisely as if a man, not content with putting on a coat of English broad cloth, must decorate it with, now and then, a stripe or a fringe of the Scottish plaid. Some of the genuine Scottish airs possess much sweetness, and a degree of delicacy and tenderness, that has not been surpassed by the national music of any country. The airs of "Tweed Side," "The Yellow Hair'd Laddie," and "Roslin Castle," are exquisite specimens of unadorned elegant melody. Mr. Ross, to be sure, may claim a sort of national right, to be a composer of Scottish ballads, but we must frankly confess that he does not come up to our ideas of the character of the school which he adopts. Some of the turns and peculiarities of the Scottish music appear in his ballads, but they possess not the originality or the sweetness of the models he has copied. There is too great a mixture of the modern English with the old Scottish style. We cannot therefore bestow upon Mr. Ross in this instance more than a moderate share of our approbation.

"*We'll meet beside the dusky glen.*"

*A Scottish Ballad, written by Mr. Robert Tannahill, and set to Music, with an Accompaniment for the Piano Forte, by Mr. Ross.*

We like this ballad rather better than the foregoing one. It possesses more of the characteristic simplicity of the Scottish style. It is however rather destitute of originality, and the same passage occurs so frequently as to tire the hearer, especially as the song is protracted to four verses.

"*Accept a heart my dearest girl.*"

*A favourite Rondo, written by Mr. W. Preston, and set to Music with an Accompaniment for the Piano Forte, by Mr. Ross.*

Here we meet Mr. Ross on English ground, and here, strange as it may seem, he appears more at home than in Scotland. We re-

gret that we cannot award him a distinguished place among our Composers; but to this we presume he does not aspire. The subject of the rondo is certainly not very new, the accompaniment however is well arranged, and the whole produces rather a pleasing effect.

*"To thy rocks, stormy Lannow, adieu."*

*A Ballad, by Anne Seward, set to Music, with an Accompaniment for the Piano Forte, by Mr. Ross.*

This ballad possesses more merit than any of the above-mentioned compositions of this author. The melody, though certainly not entitled to the praise of originality, is striking, and expresses well the sentiment of the words. We are sorry not to be able to give Mr. Ross our unqualified approbation even in this ballad, which we certainly on the whole are inclined to speak well of; but we think he has not made sufficient use of the advantage which the minor mood possesses, that of modulating with effect, into the major. At the commencement of the second part of the song, he does indeed change into the key of E flat, but it is for so short a time, that we scarcely feel it before we are carried back to the original one of C minor, where we are kept to the end of the song. The words are parodied by Miss Seward, on the elegant ballad of "Scalton Cliffs," which was set by the present Dr. Clarke of Cambridge, with accompaniments by Dr. P. Hayes, and was one of the first of that ingenious Composer's productions.——We will give Mr. Ross one piece of advice, which we think he will do well to attend to. Let him aim more at quality than quantity in his compositions, and let him beware of thinking that every production of his pen is worthy the public attention; for if he is desirous of establishing a permanent reputation, one composition possessing true genius and originality, will more certainly effect his purpose, than fifty flimsy productions which are forgotten as quickly as they are performed.

*Aria et Rondo pour le Piano Forte, composeés et dedieés a mi Lady Charlotte Spencer, par L. Von Esch.*

M. Von Esch is a Composer of considerable eminence for the Piano Forte. The style of his music is not indeed marked by much originality, nor can he be classed with the first writers for the instrument; but his compositions bespeak an intimate knowledge of it, combined with a pleasing fancy, and a correct taste. The aria before us, opens well, and the subject is skilfully kept up. The Polacca which follows, is lively and elegant. On the whole we can recommend it as a good lesson for the young performer.

*Marche Sicilienne, et Rondo pour le Piano Forte, composeés et dedieés a mi Lady Frances Pratt, par L. Von Esch.*

The march in A major with which this piece opens, is bold and spirited; a Siciliana movement in A minor follows, which leads into a rondo, of which the subject is pretty, and the arrangement skilful. The whole lies well for the hand, and will be found a pleasing as well as useful lesson.

# THE DRAMA.

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE.——*Shakspeare.*

## TRUTH *versus* COBBETT.

## TO THE FREE AND INDEPENDENT ELECTORS OF WESTMINSTER.

"Measureless Lyar."——*Coriolanus.*

GENTLEMEN,

Mr. W. Cobbett, in a letter addressed to you, dated the 30th of January, and published in his *Weekly Political Register* of the 7th of the following month, has amused, or rather *abused*, you with a number of gross and false reflections upon the profession of an Actor; so gross as to be unworthy of any pen but his own, and so false as to justify my applying to him the motto printed at the head of this article. Lest any one of you, imputing a quality to this man which he does not possess, should give any credit to his statements, and so entertain an unjust prejudice towards a respectable part of the community, whom he contemptuously calls '*Play Actors*,' I have been induced to vindicate the Professors of the Stage from his scurrility; and this point I shall most completely accomplish, if facts are allowed to be of more weight than assertions, and truth to have a greater title to respect, than falsehood.

GENTLEMEN,—Mr. Cobbett quotes the well known line of Pope, 'unelbowed by a Flatterer, Pimp or Player,' because he thinks, probably, that what he himself might say, would produce little effect, without the apparent sanction of some respectable authority; but it happens to be notorious, that Pope's satire upon the actors, originated in chagrin; the bad success of a Dramatic piece called *Three Hours after Marriage*, in which he was concerned with Gay and Arbuthnot, mortified his vanity, and provoked his petulance; and, because Cibber introduced what he calls a *fling*, at this condemned three-act piece into his performance of *Bayes*, which set the audience in a roar, and still further increased the mortification of the Author; he revenged himself by substituting Cibber for Theobald as the hero of his *Dunciad*, and gratified the malignity of his 'wise and *just* mind,' by insinuating that a Player merited the same degree of contempt, with a flatterer and a pimp. And yet he had lived upon terms of intimacy with Betterton, and published under that *Player's* name, a version, into modern English, of Chaucer's

prologues, which Fenton believed to have been the performance of Pope himself. If he had thought therefore that a *Player*, as such, was an associate fit only for a pimp and a flatterer, it is not likely that he would have published a work in the name of an actor; that he would have painted the portrait of Betterton, and have regarded him, as his biographers tell us he did, with kindness and esteem. In his youth he was so delighted with theatrical exhibitions, that he formed a kind of play from Ogilby's Iliad, with some verses of his own intermixed, which he persuaded his school-fellows to act, with the addition of his master's gardener, who personated *Ajax*. Besides the share he had in *Three Hours after Marriage*, he wrote a comedy; and a tragedy on the legend of St. Genevieve; and in his justly celebrated prologue to *Cato*, he thus asserts the utility and dignity of the Drama.

> To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,
> To raise the genius, and to mend the heart,
> To make mankind in conscious virtue bold,
> Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold:
> For this the tragic muse first trod the stage;
> Commanding tears to stream through every age.
> Tyrants no more their savage nature kept
> And foes to virtue wondered how they wept.

I think I have advanced enough to prove that the line which Mr. Cobbett has selected, to shew 'the degree of estimation in which Play-Actors stood' with Pope, was the result of disappointment, spleen and malice; and that he had, in fact, a reverence more than common, both for actors and the stage.

Gentlemen; the actors are abused by Mr. Cobbett for "co-operating to stifle your voice," and Mr. Sheridan is taxed with meanness for "accepting of a feast" at their hands. A company of comedians can no more stifle the voice of the Electors of Westminster, than any other company or body. An actor, if he be a housekeeper, will no doubt vote for his favourite candidate, and promote his interests as far as in his power. Is not Mr. Cobbet entitled to do this for any person to whose cause he should wish well; and shall we blame the performers of Drury-lane for using their exertions to secure the election of a gentleman whose dramatic writings are the boast of the age, and whose brilliant genius, and captivating eloquence, have so long and often excited the highest admiration in the Parliament of Great Britain?

This is the "head and front of their offending;" they wished success to Mr. Sheridan's election; to protect him from the violence of a set of ruffians who threatened his life, and actually struck at his head with a cleaver, they put their own persons to some hazard; to celebrate his return as the member for Westminster, they asked Mr. Sheridan to a dinner, and he thought it an honour to accept the invitation.

Mr. Cobbett next talks of the *law*, and with the same knowledge of his subject as I have shewn that he possesses with respect to Pope and the *players*. He tells you that the *law* makes Richard Brinsley Sheridan "Right Honourable;"---no such thing. When the King issues his Royal command that a person shall be sworn a Privy Counsellor, the oath is no sooner administered to him than he takes, as a matter of courtesy, the title of "Right Honourable." He

tells you that the *law*, or our code of laws, denominate play-actors "*vagabonds*;"—no such thing. Actors, merely as such, are not, nor ever were considered as vagabonds. By a statute of Elizabeth, "common players, *unless authorised*, are deemed rogues:" By an act of the 10th, George II, c. 19. "Players *acting within five miles of either university*, are deemed rogues and vagabonds; and by the 26th of the same King, c. 25, which contains some other regulations respecting theatres, there is an exception *in favour of Drury-lane, and Covent-Garden*, "and of such performances and public entertainments as are or shall be lawfully exercised and carried on under, or by virtue of letters patent or licence from the Crown, or the Lord Chamberlain of his Majesty's household:" so that it necessarily follows that such players only are vagabonds as commit an offence which the law has forbidden. If actors were vagabonds, would his MAJESTY condescend to call them *his servants*; would he honour them, as he does, with his especial countenance? and would the legislature have passed an act of parliament to sanction a fund for the decayed members of the theatrical profession? The *law*, as well as the *fact*, therefore are both against Mr. Cobbett's assertions. I am ashamed, Gentlemen, to offer such stale arguments in opposition to the "despicable cant" which this ignorant and impudent libeller has dealt out "for the sole purpose of silencing the voice of truth;" and then he asks with an affected simplicity, as if he had really stated *facts*, "are we to be called ILLIBERAL?" certainly not *illiberal*; the epithet is too mild. Such are some of the "gross and scurrilous untruths" which, as Mr. Sheridan has so justly observed, "his nature, his habits, and his cause, compel him to deal in." I so far disagree with Mr. Sheridan in his opinion, that "it is useless to continue to detect and expose them," that I think I am doing a service to society, the stage, and particularly to the electors of Westminster, in exhibiting this man, who does not even '*lye like truth*,' in his proper colours.

Following the order of Mr. Cobbett's letter, I shall quote his next falsehood, and then proceed to confute it. "He (Mr. Sheridan) told the play-actors, who, by the bye, were amongst the lowest of that tribe, that he had *royal* blood flowing in his veins; that he has, said Munden, in a whisper to Mathews, "for the only time I ever saw his father, he was King of Denmark." Of the benefit of this *bit of wit*, such as it is, I will not seek to deprive the *satyrical rogue*; but like the story of *Alice* in the *Castle Spectre*, the remark has one great fault in it, it is not *true*. Mr. Sheridan made no boast of his royal blood; on the contrary, he considered it as a weakness to insist on the claims of mere descent, and, referring to the aspersions which had been cast upon him and his family, only observed, in the same modest spirit as Othello makes mention of *his* lineage, that he might say

> "If boasting were an honour, he fetched his life and being
> From men of Royal siege."

There were present most of the principal actors of both theatres. Mr. Kemble pleaded illness, and did not attend. Mr. Munden never saw Mr. Sheridan, senior, in *Hamlet*, and he could not have whispered to Mr. Mathews, because they sat at different tables, and had no conversation with each other during the whole of the evening.

There are, after these "gross and scurrilous untruths," some opinions of Mr. Cobbett respecting the calling of an actor, which, to use his own words on another occasion, "I could demolish in three minutes." But with his opinions I have nothing to do; they are as worthless as himself, and need not be disturbed. I propose only to detect his falsehoods; to these I shall confine myself, and it will be seen that I have business enough on my hands.

"Mr. Sheridan's father was a play-actor; a play-actor too, not like the Kemble's; whose rare endowments, and whose excellent characters, serve to screen from universal contempt, a profession, the followers of which hate and envy them in return; not a play-actor of this description, but a play-actor of the lowest, of the very lowest cast, of a cast not less low, and that is saying much, than any one of the hosts of the dinner given in honour of his son."

The assertion in the latter part of this quotation has already been refuted. The *endowments* of the Kembles, and their *characters*, shall be just what Mr. Cobbett pleases. But, as the Kembles cannot believe an iota of what he has said with respect to the rank which Mr. Sheridan bore in society, and on the stage; and as they will not assert, because they will not assert what is false, that their own pretensions are of an order superior to those of Mr. Thomas Sheridan, they will know how to appreciate the value of Mr. Cobbett's praise. Leaving the Kembles out of the question, whose great professional talents nobody will attempt to deny, let me remind you, gentlemen, that such men as Betterton, Booth, Wilks, Quin, Garrick, Barry, Henderson, Mossop, *this very Mr Sheridan* (I speak now of tragedians only); and such women as Mrs. Oldfield, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Pope, and many others, have had *rare endowments*, and *excellent characters* as well as the Kembles, and then I leave you to judge whether it was left to *them*, to "screen" this under-rated profession "from universal contempt." If on account of the "rare endowments" with which we know they are gifted, and of those "excellent characters" which we will hope and believe they possess, they are *envied* and *hated* by their fellow performers, they are indeed most unfortunate---but that they *are* so hated and envied, few will believe, now Mr. Cobbett has told us so, and if he should have stumbled upon a truth by accident, this hatred and envy, may be attributable to causes "more germane to the matter," than their *rare endowments*, and *excellent characters*.

"Mr. Sheridan was a play-actor of the lowest cast" COBBETT. "say you so, say you so? I say unto you again, you are a shallow, cowardly hind, and you lie." SHAKSPEARE. Now to the proof. Hear, Gentlemen, what is said of this, "play-actor of the lowest cast," by those whose veracity may be relied on. "As if one period had been fixed on by fate for awakening the almost expiring taste of both kingdoms, it was nearly at the same time that our great brilliant star appeared at once with dazzling lustre in the East, and this other new phenomenon (Mr. Sheridan) shone forth with almost equal lustre from the West of the theatric hemisphere."---*Biog. Dram.*---Mr. Davies states, that his success on the Dublin stage was so great, that Quin, "who arrived in that city during the first warm glow of Mr. Sheridan's prosperity, with an intention to act, was obliged to quit that metropolis with disgust, if not disgrace." Such was the merit and attraction of this actor of the *very lowest cast*.

But this, Mr. Cobbett, may say, was in his native city. Be it so, let us bring him to London. "The acquisition of such an actor as Mr. Sheridan must have been desirable to the managers of either of the London theatres. It was the mutual interest of Mr. Garrick and Mr. Sheridan to come to a reasonable agreement; this was soon effected, notwithstanding a coldness had for some time subsisted between them. It was stipulated that Mr. Sheridan should act a certain number of nights, and receive a fourth share of profits, after deducting 80l. for the expences of the theatre. This Gentleman had been long esteemed a man of eminence in his profession; and, notwithstanding Mr. Garrick's great reputation for acting, some critics did not scruple to compare, nay, prefer, Sheridan's performance of certain capital characters, such as Macbeth and Hamlet, to the other's utmost efforts in those parts. But indeed the manager's own jealousy justified the public good opinion of Mr. Sheridan's ability. Mr Garrick soon found that his engagement with this actor was of very great advantage to him. Little difference in the bulk of audiences was to be perceived when they acted separately the parts of Hamlet and Richard, or any other capital character. The manager himself owned that except Barry, he had never found so able an assistant; for the best of them he said, could scarcely draw together a hundred pound audience. But Garrick's ruling passion was the love of fame; and his uneasiness, arising from the success of Sheridan, began every day to be more and more visible. However, he seemed for a time to suspend his jealousy, and promote every scheme proposed by Sheridan for their mutual profit.

"This account is taken from the *Life of Garrick* by Mr. Davies, who is not likely to have *over-rated* Mr. Sheridan's abilities and success as an actor, while contrasting him with his hero Mr. Garrick.

It is also an indisputable fact, that to the character, talents, and exertions of Mr. Sheridan, the improved state of the Irish stage is entirely indebted.

I will now tell you what this "*lowest of the low*" was in his family, his education, and manners; what was his estimation with those whose esteem was valuable, and the public honours and testimonies of respect which followed him, as a man, a scholar, and a gentleman. His father Dr. Thomas Sheridan, was the intimate friend of Dean Swift, that Swift who was the associate of that Pope whom Mr. Cobbett professes so highly to revere. He was, as Lord Corke has observed, "deeply versed in the Greek and Roman Languages, and in their customs and antiquities." Mr. T. Sheridan, his son, was educated at Westminster school, and by pure merit elected a King's scholar. On his return to Dublin, he was sent to the University, and was chosen of the foundation, and soon after obtained an exhibition. His academic honours, and public distinctions were considerable. He was Master of Arts in three of the most learned Universities of Europe—Oxford, Cambridge and Dublin; in the latter of which, his Alma-Mater, he was regularly matriculated, and obtained the distinction in due course of gradation, where the qualifications are by no means trifling, and the examinations singularly severe. In the year 1758 he paid a visit in his literary capacity to Oxford, and immediately on his arrival in that renowned seat of eminent professors, he was distinguished with unusual attention;

and on Tuesday, November 28th, was admitted in congregation to the degree of Master of Arts. In a subsequent visit soon after to the sister university, Cambridge, he experienced the like honourable reception, and had the same degree conferred on him there also. At Edinburgh he was honoured with the freedom of the city, which was presented to him by the hands of Dr. Robertson, the celebrated professor of history, &c.

So much for his education and rank in society. As an author I need only mention his *Essay on British Education*; his course of *Oratorical Lectures*; and his *Dictionary*, as an encouragement to the prosecution of which, his present Majesty granted him, without solicitation, a pension of 200l. a year. Hear what Dr. Johnson says of him, (even when he was at variance with him) on the occasion of an exception made in his favour in an Irish act of Parliament, concerning Insolvent Debtors. "Thus to be singled," said the Doctor, "by a legislature, as an object of public consideration and kindness, is a proof of no common merit." That he had a noble mind, and was actuated by independent principles, his own declaration shall decide. "I would rather see my two sons at the head of respectable academies, as a situation the most beneficial to mankind, than one of them Prime Minister of Britain, and the other at the head of affairs in Ireland." That this was not the ebullition of mortified ambition, is evident, for at that time his eldest son Charles Francis was Secretary at War, and Member of the House of Commons in Ireland; and the present Treasurer of the Navy, Representative for Stafford in England. Again, when it was insinuated that he was an expectant upon Government for support, Mr. Sheridan thus contradicted the report. "Mr. Sheridan begs leave to observe that this was not his case; he had it in his power to provide for himself better than the Government could. He had set out in life upon certain principles, early imbibed from his great master Swift, which would not suffer him to think of such a course. Among these, one of the foremost was independence; without which there could be no liberty. By independence he means only a reliance upon a man's self, and his own talents and labours, for his support and advancement in life; for absolute independence belongs not to human beings."

I despair of *shaming the rogue* by printing these evidences; but I do hope, Gentlemen, that they will make some impression upon such electors, and to those only I address myself, who, like Mr. Thomas Sheridan, are of free and independent principles.

"Whence his (the Representative of Westminster's) mother sprang, it would be useless to ascertain." To Mr. Cobbett it would have been useless, because he knew that if he had described her origin and character, his infamous object had been defeated. Know then, Gentlemen, that Mrs. Frances Sheridan, the wife of the *lowest of the low*, whom we have just spoken of, was grand-daughter to Sir Oliver Chamberlaine. Her morals, her manners, her talents, are above our panegyric. While she lived, she was beloved, esteemed, and admired; and 'till this Gothic foe to merit and virtue, dared to treat her memory with contempt, her name has never been mentioned without an accompanying tribute of respect and admiration. Mrs. F. Sheridan was the author of the comedy of the *Discovery*; the romance of *Nourjahad*; and the novel of *Sidney Biddulph*, the powerful pathos of which drew

this very high compliment from Dr. Johnson. "I know not, Madam, that you have a right upon moral principles, to make your readers suffer so much." It will therefore be admitted that if virtue, accomplishments, and genius, are worthy of our regard and imitation, it will NOT be "*useless*" to enquire into the history of this exemplary Lady.

Mr. Cobbett then draws a comparison between himself and Mr. Sheridan, *(risum teneatis ?)* and asks, whether "his habits contracted in tending of birds, and driving the plough." (He cautiously avoids any mention of the *Halbert*, and his expulsion from America as an obnoxious character) "are more likely to engender or confirm a base disposition, than were his habits, when with a "walk in Ladies and Gentlemen," he stood at the door and received the sixpences at his father's recitations in Marlborough-street."

"These lies are like the father that begets them; gross as a mountain, open, palpable."

Mr. Sheridan was then at Harrow school. His father was respected and befriended by all the principal nobility and persons of distinction in the kingdom. To three courses of his lectures he had upwards of 1600 subscribers at a guinea each, and the publication of the lectures had a rapid sale at a price which was then considered very high, viz. half a guinea a copy.

From the mother of Mr. Sheridan, a Lady, as we have demonstrated, of extraordinary worth and transcendant genius, this ruffian, (does he merit a less offensive name?) gratifies "his nature and his habits" by characterizing his first wife as the daughter of a *Fiddler*, and "getting her living by singing for hire." To be a *fiddler*, and to *sing for hire*, are not at all discreditable; but vulgar men delight in giving their "worst of thoughts the worst of *words*." This *fiddler*, Gentlemen, was a musical composer, and instructor, of the first eminence in this country; and his daughter, during the short time she appeared before the public, received the most distinguished marks of attention from all quarters, and as a singer of sacred music, is still recollected and spoken of with enthusiasm by the best judges of vocal excellence. But it would not be in character if the votaries of science, and the triumphs of beauty and talent, were even by chance to be mentioned with respect by a man, whose system is to set the forms of decency, and of manhood, at defiance, and to endeavour to reduce all the principles of science, taste, honour, and good manners, to the standard of his own low, savage, filthy, and disgusting notions.

"Here, Gentlemen, I should dismiss the loathsome topic," but that Mr. Cobbett has described himself as a courageous hero, and talked of "belabouring Mr. T Sheridan with a horsewhip." This, "supposing him to speak the truth," a supposition which, having detected so many of his falsehoods "is never to be hastily adopted," is very fine vapouring upon paper. But if I may credit what I have heard of the bravery of this man of war, and knowing as I do, the manly spirit, and the muscular strength of Mr. T. Sheridan, I will venture to predict that, whenever that Gentleman shall send in his name as a visitant to Mr. Cobbett, all the noble valour of *Serjeant Bobadil* will instantly *ooze out*;

> His knotted and combined locks will part,
> And each particular hair will stand on end,
> Like quills upon the fretful *Porcupine*.

With regard to the *Non nobis Domine*, which was sung after the dinner, Mr. Cobbett has wantonly misinterpreted both the motive and the application. I will not say that the words in question are always sung with the reverence which is due; but they were certainly introduced upon this occasion, only because in public companies, it has been usual to return thanks with this most noble and sublime composition, and by no means as alluding to the "triumph of the Sheridan's over *us*." (US!!) To make good, however, the old saying, that the *Devil can quote Scripture for his purpose*, he has cited the first verses of the 135th psalm, and this he *truly* tells you, (the only *truth* he has spoken) from the information of somebody who could translate the Latin language is the English version of what was sung at the *play-actors*, dinner.

The toast which is said to have followed the singing, is "a weak invention of the enemy," and of the falsehood of it I am so convinced, that, concluding, as I began, I shall just address these two words to Mr. Cobbett at parting, "and then to breakfast with what appetite he may," *Mentiris impudentissime*. His friend, the scholar, will interpret their meaning.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

AN ELECTOR OF WESTMINSTER.

And a Friend to Truth.

*March* 18, 1807.

---

## MRS. JORDAN.

Some years ago, when this lady performed in Glasgow, the audience presented her with a gold medal, which they enclosed in the following letter:

"Madam,

"Accept this trifle from the Glasgow audience, who are as great admirers of genius, as the critics of Edinburgh."

On one side of the medal is the Glasgow *arms*, which is a tree, &c. on the other side a feather, with the following inscription:

"*Bays* from our tree you could not gather,
"No *branch* of it deserves that name;
"So take it all, call it a feather,
"And place it in your cap of fame."

*Glasgow*, 1807. A CITIZEN.

# POETRY.

## DIRGE

ON THE MUCH LAMENTED DEATH OF THE BEAUTIFUL MARIA LINLEY.

Larded all with sweet flowers,
She bewept to the grave did go
With true-love showers. SHAKSPEARE.

*By the late Charles Lefiley, Esq.*

Underneath this ebon shade,
Mark'd by a rudely sculptured stone,
The lov'd Maria, low is laid;
Soft be the turf she rests upon.

These flowers that grow around her tomb,
All bear a paler hue,
And die almost before they bloom;
Their sympathy so true.

The pensive powers who haunt the grove,
Shall here their vigils keep;
Chaunt their wild requiems o'er my love,
And soothe her lasting sleep.

Pity for her shall touch the string,
And breathe her softest sigh;
And here her holy strains shall sing
Of heaven-taught melody.

For she was sweet as opening buds,
Mild as the hours of May,
Bright as the sun-beam on the floods,
And constant as the day.

Friend of my youth! for thee my tears
Spontaneously shall flow,
And memory through a length of years
Shall nurse the sighs of woe.

For thee, when autumn glows around,
An offering sad I'll pay,
Deck with fresh wreathes thy hallow'd ground,
And mourn the fatal day.

On thee, amid life's varied part,
My tenderest thoughts shall rest,
Bemoan'd, while love can warm my heart,
Or friendship cheer my breast.

SIR ROWLAND.

## LINES,

*Upon seeing a beautiful Infant sleeping on the bosom of its Mother.*

Upon its native pillow dear,
The little slumb'rer finds repose,
His fragrant breath eludes the ear,
A zephyr passing o'er a rose.

Yet soon from that pure spot of rest,
Love's little throne! shalt thou be torn;
Time hovers o'er thy downy rest
To crown thy baby brow with thorn.

Oh! thoughtless! couldst thou now but see
On what a world thou soon must move,
Or taste the cup prepared for thee
Of grief, lost hopes, or widow'd love:

Ne'er from that breast thoud'st raise thine head,
But thou would'st breathe to heav'n a pray'r
To let thee in thy blossom fade,
And in a kiss to perish there.

I. C.

# THE LONDON THEATRES.

## DRURY LANE.

1807.
Jan. 1. Will.—Enchanters.
2. Know your own Mind.—Ib.
3. Child of Nature.—Tekeli.—Ib.
5. Point of Honour.—Tekeli.—Ib.
6. Douglas.—Tekeli.—Ib.
7. Siege of Belgrade.—Ib.
8. Point of Honour.—Tekeli.—Ib.
9. Cabinet.—Ib.
10. Provoked Husband.—Ib.
12. False Alarms, or My Cousin, (first time.)—Deaf Lover.
13. Ib.—Spoiled Child.
14. Ib.—Tekeli.
15. Ib.—Enchanters.
16. Ib.—Tekeli.
17. Ib.—Anatomist.
19. Ib.—Tekeli.
20. Ib.—Children in the Wood.
21. Ib.—Tekeli.
22. Ib.—Who's the Dupe.
23. Ib.—Tekeli.
24. Ib.—Children in the Wood.
26. Ib.—Tekeli.
27. Ib.—Humourist.
28. Assignation (first time).—Lying Valet.
29. Honeymoon.—Tekeli.
31. Travellers.—Children in the Wood.
Feb. 2. False Alarms.—Tekeli.
3. Rivals.—Ib.
4. False Alarms.—Emily, or Juvenile Indiscretion, (first time).—Deaf Lover.
5. Pizarro.—Emily.
6. Cabinet.—Ib.
7. She stoops to Conquer.—Tekeli.
9. False Alarms.—Emily.—Wedding Day.
10. Castle Spectre.—Tekeli.
12. Haunted Tower.—Emily.—Wedding Day.
14. Jealous Wife.—Tekeli.
16. Travellers.—Fortune's Frolic.
17. Busy Body.—Emily.—Irishman in London.

Neither of the theatres has produced much novelty during the past month; but as we wish to preserve a regular journal of the performances of both houses, we have included the month of January, that the year may not be incomplete. To bring the representations down to the period from whence we mean to date a more exact and detailed criticism, we shall offer a few slight observations upon such pieces in the above list, as have been produced this season.

The ENCHANTERS; or *Harlequin Sultaun*, is a pantomime hastily patched together for the Christmas holidays. The performance bore all the marks of this haste. The actors had no knowledge of the business; the tricks were stale, and the scenery was heavy and unmanageable. TEKELI is a *Melodrame*, altered from the French by Mr. Theodore Hook, and adapted to the English stage with ingenuity andsuccess. The interest arises from the "hair-breadth 'scapes" of a noble warrior, who endeavours to rescue his country from the cruel gripe of its oppressors. It has already been played forty nights. The music is by Mr. Hook senior, and is in his best style.

FALSE ALARMS is an Opera by Mr. Kenny, the author of that excellent Farce, *Raising the Wind*. In the present piece he has not been very successful; but the music of Mr. Braham; the novelty of his performing on the *piano forte*, which in truth he touches with a masterly finger; and the attraction of his song, "*Says a Smile to a Tear*;" have carried the Opera through many representations, much to the advantage of the theatre. On the music of this Opera we will make a few observations. It is the joint production of Mr. Braham, and M. P. King, and possesses much taste, fancy, and expression. The song we have already mentioned, and the duet between Mr. Braham and Signora Storace, most delightfully executed, are very pleasing and elegant compositions. The overture by Mr. King, is scientific, but not well calculated for the purpose for which it was intended. The song by Miss Duncan; the air allotted to Mrs. Bland; and Mrs. Mountain's Harp song, also possess much merit in point of composition; but Mr. King's music in general is of too sombre a cast for an English theatre. He indulges too much in harmony to produce pleasant melodies. His accompaniments are overloaded, and prevent the performer from giving the proper effect to the songs The comic part of the music is very indifferent. No composer will ever succeed eminently in this respect who does not make the style his peculiar study. The comedy of ASSIGNATION it is painful to us to mention, because we must say that it is the production of a Lady of distinguished worth and genius, the author of the *Recess* and the *Chapter of Accidents*, which was dismissed from the boards with contempt, and merited the disgraceful treatment it received. EMILY; or *Juvenile Indiscretion*, is a Ballet by Mr. D'Egville, composed for the purpose, (which is fully accomplished) of exhibiting the graces and cleverness of Miss Gayton to the best advantage. The character she sustains, is a kind of *Little Pickle*, and the whole idea seems to have been suggested by the *Spoiled Child*.

---

### COVENT GARDEN.

Jan. 1. Birth Day.—Arbitration, or Free and Easy.—Harlequin and Mother Goose, or the Golden Egg, (fourth time.)
2. Tempest.
3. Merry Wives of Windsor.
5. Wheel of Fortune.
6. Deserts of Arabia.—Arbitration.
7. Tempest.
8. Every Man in his Humour.
9. As you like it.

Jan. 10. Tempest.
12. Revenge.
13. Birth Day.—Arbitration.
14. Tempest.
15. Provoked Husband.
16. Tempest.
17. Cure for the Heart-Ache.
19. Revenge.
20. Much Ado about Nothing.
21. Tempest.
22. Man of the World.
23. Tempest.
24. School of Reform.
26. Richard III.
27. Tempest.
28. Rule a Wife and Have a Wife.
29 Speed the Plough.
Feb. 2. Revenge.
3. Tempest.
4. Man of the World.
5. Way to Keep Him.
6. Tempest.
7. A New Way to Pay Old Debts.
9. Mountaineers.
10. Suspicious Husband.
12. Tempest.
14. Man of the World.
16. Cymbeline.
17. Jealous Wife.
19. Tempest.

*** Harlequin and Mother Goose was performed on all of the above evenings.

HARLEQUIN, and MOTHER GOOSE, is the best pantomime we have had since *Harlequin Oberon:* its attraction still continues, and seems likely to run through the season. Mr. Dibdin and Mr. Farley, are the ingenious gentlemen to whom this piece, so excellent in its kind, is attributed. The music by Mr. Ware, is appropriate: the overture sprightly and effective. A Master Smalley sings a song with a power of voice that is surprizing; but this lad is too fond of imitating the great singers; this artifice catches the applause of the million, but it is really ridiculous, and the boy sings shockingly out of tune; a simple air should be given to him, and, with good instruction, he might do something.

The TEMPEST is a revival by Mr. Kemble, with additions from Dryden and Davenant, as tasteless as indecent, and totally subversive of the simplicity of Shakspeare's drama. Mr. Kemble's pronunciation of the word "aches" in this play, has confounded the ignorant, and made wiser folks smile.

"Fill all thy bones with *a-ches:* make thee roar."

We shall say a few, and but a few words, upon this much contested point. The word *aches*, has been generally used as a dyssyllable by the poets, 'till within the last century. Examples

innumerable, might be produced, if necessary, to prove that Mr. Kemble is *right*, in dividing the word into two syllables, and giving a soft sound to the *ch*. *Right* certainly, with respect to Shakspeare's metre, and the usage of his time: but certainly *wrong*, as violating the practice of the present day, and indulging himself in a piece of foolish pedantry, without necessity, and without merit. Shakspeare employs the plural noun we believe only twice more throughout all his plays—his use of it is uniformly dissyllabical.

"A-ches contract and starve your supple joints" *(Timon.)*

"Their fears of hostile strokes, their a-ches, losses. *(ib.)*

But the necessity of a rigid adherence to the intention of Shakspeare, will be a poor plea from Mr. Kemble, who in this very play of the TEMPEST, has admitted the most barbarous innovations; who accents Coriolanus upon the second syllable, for no earthly reason that we can discover, but because Shakspeare invariably places it on the fourth; and who scruples not, whenever he thinks fit, to set up his own wrong readings against the undisputed and indisputable authority of the great bard himself. On these grounds we think Mr. Kemble might have omitted the passage altogether; have substituted a synonime in the room of *a-ches*; have inserted the particle "*to*," between "*make thee*" and "*roar*;" or have covered the *hiatus* in the metre, by dwelling on, and giving the word double time, like a note in music; any of these methods would have been preferable to his tooth-breaking, ear-grating *aitches*. Shakspeare's text cannot be altered—*e. scripta manet*—but something must always be conceded to universal custom.

We have noticed that "for something or for nothing," when the TEMPEST has been acted, the bills have announced the *characters as before*; while the cast of the plays for a week onward, is particularized below. A play bill has always been considered as a guide to the audience present, at least it was so in Garrick's time; but now it merely refers them to a previous performance which they have not attended, or a future one which they have no desire to see. It is like inviting a man to an auction, and then putting into his hand a catalogue of the articles that have been sold.

ARBITRATION, is a FREE AND EASY farce, by Mr. Reynolds, supported with inimitable spirit by Lewis; and the DESERTS OF ARABIA, an operatic romance by the same lively and ingenious writer, decorated with all the pomp of the stage, and furnished with some pleasing music by Lanza.

*** Several novelties are preparing at both houses; particularly the *Curfew*, by the author of the Honeymoon; and a comedy from the elegant pen of Mr. Morton.

## THE COUNTRY THEATRES, &c.

The COUNTRY THEATRES are justly entitled to our attention, from the importance they have acquired of late years; the respectability with which many of them are, and all ought to be conducted; the obvious justice of noticing merit wherever it may display itself; and the propriety of affording redress for the animadversions of those who have a local right to offer their sentiments with respect to the regulations of the provincial managers.

We shall always be ready to *hear both sides*; and unless we find the parties indulging in wanton scurrillity, we shall allow them the privilege of expressing themselves freely. *Brevity* however is indispensible; and we must premise to our Correspondents, that the liberty of curtailment will be unreservedly assumed by us. We begin with the SCOTCH Stage; Dublin; Bath; Manchester; Liverpool; Norwich, &c. shall be attended to in their turns.

EDINBURGH.—The Company having gone to Glasgow to pass as usual a few weeks after Christmas I shall merely make a few observations upon it *generally*, no opportunity having offered for detailed remark, or particular criticism.

The inhabitants of Edinburgh gave all due encouragement to the Theatre the few weeks it was open; though I have not heard that those who had *once* gratified their curiosity by seeing the *best company out of London*, as our managers call it, are much in the habit of repeating their visits.

Some genuine talent has no doubt been gained, but it is equally true, that by the *defections* of last season, much has been lost to the Theatrical Stock. Of the very meritorious exertions, and the various excellencies of that most promising actor, *Mr. Megget*, I shall hereafter say a few words; of the merits of Mrs. Young no one is iguorant. Archer is I believe what is called a *fair* actor, and a person of the name of Vining, possesses some degree of cleverness, and even a little judgment. But the old women of Mrs. Jones, the countrymen of Turpin (in that department inferior to few) the usefulness of Mrs. Turpin, often respectable, sometimes excellent, never contemptible, in almost every department; the *outre* old men of Hollingsworth, the correct delineation, and very reputable execution of Mrs. Mason, who wanted only figure and face to entitle her to high professional rank——ALL these are either totally wanting, or most inadequately supplied. Hence it is the opinion of some not inimical to the *individual* talents of the new company, that as a *whole* it is less complete than the generally despised one of last season.

Of Mrs. Young, my opinion is this. In all she attempts her judgment is apparent; her mental accomplishments evidently preponderate over the gifts she has received from nature. Perfectly mistress of the scene, her eye is never fixed, nor is her attention directed, but to their proper object. She looks and walks precisely as she ought. Her voice naturally good, is under the most perfect discipline; her recitation is clear, distinct, and precise, her tones fill the house in all its parts; her manner is correct, and most impressive. No one can deliver the sense of an author with more propriety and effect than her; as in the more mechanical department of her profession, such as dressing, the accuracy of her judgment is peculiarly distinguished. Still the parsimony of Nature is perceptible. That delightful ease of deportment, that facinating vivacity of action, and gaiety of manner; that versatility of character sliding insensibly from one of its features to another, those nameless graces which seize as it were by storm upon the heart, and captivate the reason in spite often of the judgment ——These seem denied, in a degree at least, to this respectable Lady. On the contrary, a small share of *stiffishness*, (pardon the phrase) *of preciseness*, or, if you will, *over* correctness, seems to me, in her comedy, pretty apparent. Much of her Lady Teazle exhibits

the excellencies, and some of the gayer scenes the imperfections I have ventured to elucidate. In a word I am disposed always to approve, frequently to esteem, and occasionally to *admire* this lady's exertions in comedy, in which only, in Scotland at least, I have seen her perform.

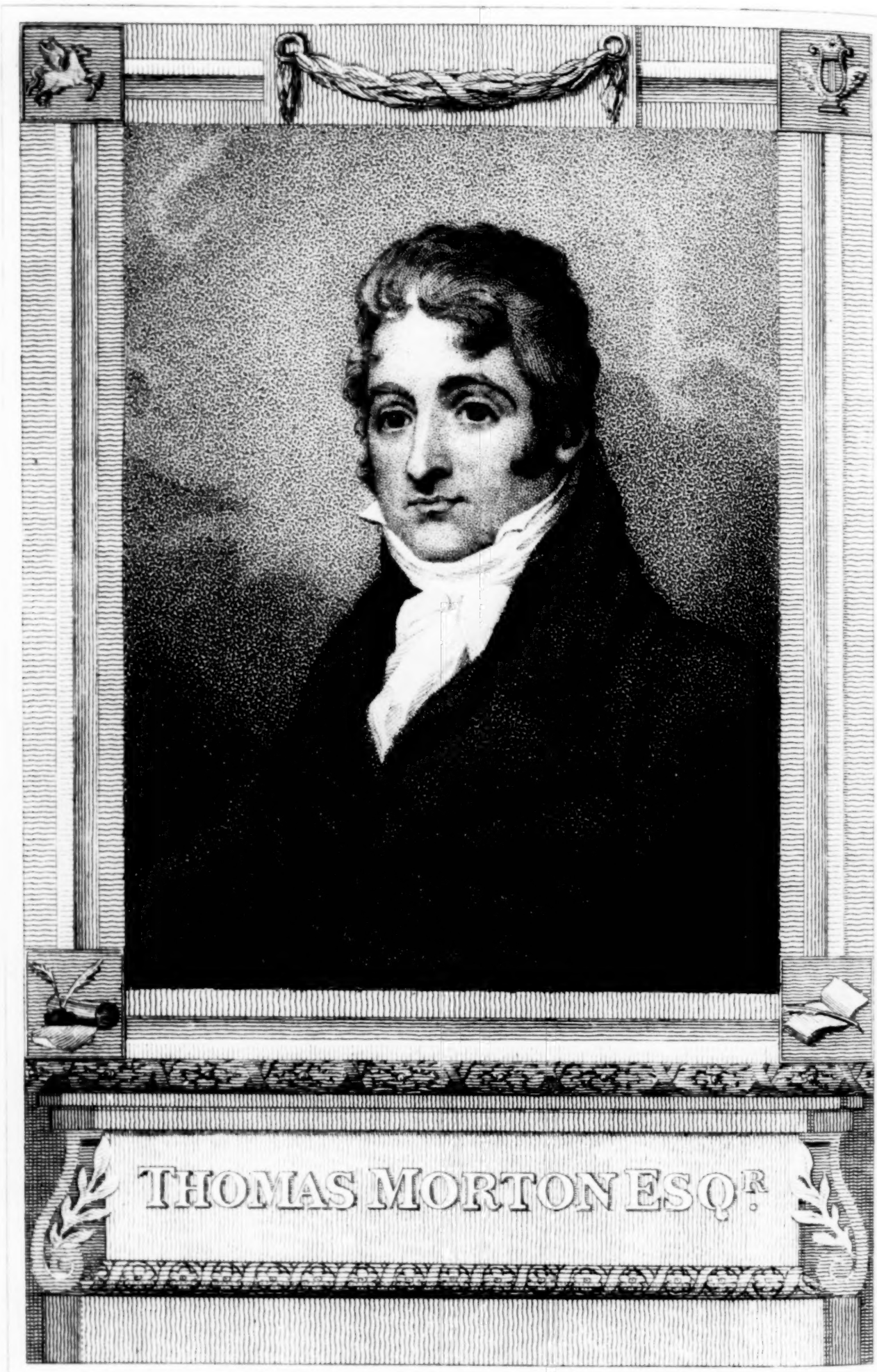
Both in tragedy and comedy Mrs. Johnson maintains a respectable rank. The lovely Miss Benson promises something; but to attain considerable eminence, her talents require culture and experience, as does her figure, years to be thoroughly formed. To Mrs. Bennet I can afford but a line, and she has already got it. (By the way she is a pretty tolerable singer). The performer of the old women whose voice appears to possess but two or three notes, is a poor substitute for that excellent and judicious actress, Mrs. Jones. Such are those of the new company whom I can recollect as entitled to notice. On the other performers I shall offer a few observations in your next. VERUS.

## THE ITALIAN OPERA.

We have scarcely room to notice Catalini, the new vocal wonder, who is now enrapturing all the world at the King's theatre. Wonderful indeed she is, but perfection she is not. Our opinion of this accomplished singer, is this. Her vocal abilities are unquestionably of the first order, and on *certain notes*, her powers are superior to almost any of her predecessors—but that she bears away the palm we deny; her voice, though of prodigious extent, is not uniformly excellent; the upper notes are entirely the produce of art and incessant practice. Of such notes she can never be quite certain; and being liable to falter, they will occasionally be out of tune. The upper part of the admirable Billington's voice, was perfect: the utmost sweetness, flexibility, and accuracy, were observeable "at the very top of her compass." Madame Catalini has the advantage of a fine person; her action is elegant and expressive, and her *recitative* given in a very superior style. All the *cadenzas* and *graces*, are executed with remarkable neatness and precision; her manner of ascending the cromatic scale by half tones, is truly surprizing, and her skipping the double octave, if we may use the expression, is most adroitly managed; but in the *sostenuto*, one of the great *stamina* of the vocal art, she seldom soars above mediocrity. In this style of singing, Madame Mara was impressive in the highest degree; her intonation was always just and perfect, and she never failed to reach the *heart*. Her manner of singing serious music can never be forgotten.

On the whole however Madame Catalini produces a most striking effect. Her attraction is immense; and the subscribers are much indebted for the spirit shewn by the proprietors in engaging, at an expence which we hear is vast, so celebrated and extraordinary a singer.

The other novelties of this theatre are Signor Seboni, a tenor singer, whose voice is pleasing, but not sufficiently powerful for so extensive a theatre; his figure is pre-possessing, his deportment easy, and he is a good actor. Madame Perini has a voice of much sweetness; in the execution of the airs allotted to her, she shews considerable taste and neatness, and her person and manner are extremely interesting. She cannot fail to be a favourite.




*Emma Smith del* *Hopwood sculp*

*Published 1 April 1807 by Mathews & Leigh*